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William Dampier

W. Clark Russell

English Men of Action

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English Men of Action

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WILLIAM DAMPIER

By
W. CLARK RUSSELL

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

PAGE

THE BUCCANEERS — NAVIGATION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY — FEATURES OF THE VOCATIONAL LIFE OF THE EARLY MARINER 1

CHAPTER II

DAMPIER'S EARLY LIFE — CAMPECHÈ — HE JOINS THE BUCCANEERS, 1652–1681 15

CHAPTER III

DAMPIER'S FIRST VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD, 1681–1691 44

CHAPTER IV

THE VOYAGE OF THE "ROEBUCK," 1699–1701 . . . 85

CHAPTER V

THE VOYAGE OF THE "ST. GEORGE," 1702–1706-7 . . 107

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

PAGE

THE VOYAGE WITH WOODES ROGERS, 1708–1711 . . 138

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION 183

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CHAPTER I

THE BUCCANEERS—NAVIGATION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY—FEATURES OF THE VOCATIONAL LIFE OF THE EARLY MARINER

In or about the middle of the seventeenth century the island of San Domingo, or Hispaniola as it was then called, was haunted and overrun by a singular community of savage, surly, fierce, and filthy men. They were chiefly composed of French colonists, whose ranks had from time to time been enlarged by liberal contributions from the slums and alleys of more than one European city and town. These people went dressed in shirts and pantaloons of coarse linen cloth, which they steeped in the blood of the animals they slaughtered. They wore round caps, boots of hogskin drawn over their naked feet, and belts of raw hide, in which they stuck their sabres and knives. They also armed themselves with firelocks which threw a couple of balls, each weighing two ounces. The places where they dried and salted their meat were called *boucans*, and from this term they came to be styled bucaniers, or buccaneers, as we spell it. They were hunters by trade, and savages

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in their habits. They chased and slaughtered horned cattle and trafficked with the flesh, and their favourite food was raw marrow from the bones of the beasts which they shot. They ate and slept on the ground, their table was a stone, their bolster the trunk of a tree, and their roof the hot and sparkling heavens of the Antilles.

But wild as they were they were at least peaceful. It is not clear that at this stage, at all events, they were in any way associated with the freebooters or rovers who were now worrying the Spaniards in those seas. Their traffic was entirely innocent, and it was assuredly the policy of the Don to suffer them to continue shooting the wild cattle without molestation. Unfortunately for themselves, the Spaniards grew jealous of them. They regarded the West Indies and the continent of South America as their own, and the presence of the foreigner was intolerable. They made war against the buccaneers, vowing expulsion or extermination. Both sides fought fiercely. The Spaniard had discipline and training; on the other hand, the buccaneer had the art of levelling as deadly a piece as the Transvaal Boer of to-day. The struggle was long and cruel; the Spaniards eventually conquered, and the hunters, quitting San Domingo, sought refuge in the adjacent islands. In spite of their defeat, troops of the buccaneers contrived from time to time to pass over into San Domingo from their head-quarters in Tortuga, where they hunted as before, and brought away with them as much cattle as sufficed them to trade with. The Spaniards lay in ambush, and shot the stragglers as they swept past in chase; but this sort of warfare proving of no avail, it was finally resolved to slaughter the whole of the cattle throughout the island,

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that the buccaneers should be starved into leaving once and for good. No act could have been rasher and more impolitic. The hunters finding their occupation gone, went over to the freebooters, and as pirates, as their history shows, in a short time abundantly avenged their indisputable wrongs.

Novelists and poets have found something fascinating in the story of the buccaneers. The light of romance colours their exploits, and even upon the maturest gaze there will linger something of the radiance with which the ardent imagination of boyhood gilds the actions and persons of those fierce sea-warriors. It is unhappily true, nevertheless, that the buccaneers were a race of treacherous, cruel, and profligate miscreants. Their name was at a later date given to, or appropriated by, such men as Clipperton, Cowley, Dampier, Woodes Rogers, and Shelvocke, whose behaviour as enemies, whose skill and heroism as seamen, and whose discoveries as navigators, greatly lightened the blackness of the old traditions. But the buccaneers of the Spanish Main,—the men who are the principal figures in the annals of the freebooters, the people whose lives are contained in such narratives as those of Joseph Exquemeling, De Lussan, De Montauban, Captain Charles Johnson, in Von Archenholtz's brief but excellent history, and in other works,—were rogues and ruffians without parallel in the history of villainy. They owned indeed many extraordinary qualities, which, exerted in honest fields of action, might have been deemed virtues of a high kind. Their courage was great, their achievements wonderful, their fortitude worthy of noble causes, their capacity of endurance unrivalled in sea story. No skil-

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fuller body of seamen were ever afloat. But their history is loathsome for the cruelties it relates. Olonois or Lolonois, Braziliano, Morgan, Bat, Le Grand, and others famous as pirates, were monsters whose like is nowhere to be matched. The relation of their sailings and landings and marchings, their assaults, pillagings, defeats, and triumphs, is a sickening narrative of barbarities; but it must be admitted, coupled with extraordinary examples of courage in some instances absolutely sublime, and of unconquerable resolution.

It was inevitable that the successes of these pirates should prove a temptation to English seafaring men. Small vessels were fitted out in British ports or the Colonies, and sailed for the West Indian Seas to pillage the Spaniard wherever he might be found on land or water. Often it happened, as Harris, the editor of a voluminous collection of voyages, tells us, that crews were embarked and pilots engaged without being apprised of the object of the voyage, "and nothing was said about the true design until they were at sea, where they (the captains) were absolute masters."[1] To this order belongs that race of English buccaneers of whom Dampier may be advanced as the most conspicuous example. They possessed all the high-spirited qualities, the daring, the courage, the endurance of the Morgans and Bats and Brazilianos, but they were seldom or never wantonly cruel; they burned, they sacked, as freely as the others; they pillaged churches with as little compunction; poverty and sickness pleaded to them in vain when, with firelocks in one hand and firebrands in the other, they thundered through the deserted street and marked

[1] Harris's *Collection*, "Cowley's Voyage," vol. i. 1748.

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their progress with flaming houses. But when human life was in their power they respected it; they fought and behaved as though the king's flag flew over their heads; there was something of the sentiment of honourable naval warfare in their lawlessness; and to their credit let this stand, that though they professed themselves as no more than privateersmen, their behaviour will certainly bear comparison with the state-sanctioned and instructed conduct of the officers and crews of the expedition under Commodore Anson.

But my business is with Captain William Dampier only. Morgan and the cut-throats who preceded or followed him have found apologists and admirers in plenty. Happily Dampier's chief claims upon the attention of posterity are based upon adventures of a very different kind from those which rendered buccaneering one of the most infamous pursuits that the wickedness or misery of mankind ever invented.

It is impossible to appreciate the intrepid seamanship of the early navigators without first taking a view of the art of navigation as it was in their time, and understanding the shapes, bulk, and rigs of the vessels in which they cruised in search of plunder or started on long voyages of discovery. In these days one is so used to the facilities of science for traversing the deep with swiftness and certainty, that it is necessary to bend the mind with some severity of thought to compass the difficulties of the old sailors and honour their triumphs justly. In the first place, their ships were so unwieldy that it was scarcely possible to get them to beat against the wind, or, to use the old-fashioned term, to "ply." An example of this will be found in Anson's *Voyage*.

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It is there recorded that the *Centurion's* consort, the *Gloucester*, was descried on June 21st from the island of Juan Fernandez some eight or ten miles to leeward, beating or reaching into the bay. The weather thickened and she disappeared. Five days afterwards she again hove in sight, and for a whole fortnight she was stretching away first on one, then on the other tack, in vain effort to reach the island; nor was it until July 23rd that she was able to enter the bay, and then only because the wind had shifted, and permitted her to head for her destination with a flowing sheet. Thus for above a month was this ship striving to get to windward and traverse three leagues on a taut bowline!

The old vessels were cumbrously rigged. At the head of their lower masts they carried huge round tops as big as a ballroom. Forward their bowsprit was encumbered with massive spritsail and sprit-topsail yards. Their sides were loaded with great channels embellished with enormous dead-eyes for setting up shrouds as thick as hawsers. They seldom exposed canvas above their topsails, though the topgallant-sail had long been introduced, as we know by a passage in Sir Walter Raleigh's Remains.[1] Their sterns were high and pink-shaped—that is, broad at the water-line and narrowing at the taffrail. They were built with deck upon deck in the after-part, the topmost being called the "topgallant-deck" by the English, and the "poop-royal" by the French and Spaniards; with the consequence that they were dangerously deep-waisted, though with their extraordinary height of side aft they floated, to

[1] *A Discourse of the First Invention of Ships*, p. 7. Ed. 1700.

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the eye, like castles. As if this were not enough, the structure where it was loftiest was crowned with enormous poop-lanthorns of a size to hold "wind enough to last a Dutchman a week!"

Structures thus shaped—the length rarely exceeding three times the beam—and propelled by low-seated canvas, could do little or nothing against head-winds and seas; and as a result the old narrators are repeatedly telling us that they were forced to *hull*, or *try*,—in other words, to heave their ship to, often in breezes in which a sailing vessel of to-day would expose a topgallant-sail over a single-reefed topsail. A succession of favourable gales would indeed put life into the clumsy waggons and furnish them with some sort of despatch, but as a rule the passage that is now made in sixty days was hardly completed by the early navigators in a twelvemonth. Their ships were unsheathed. It is true that Sebastian Cabot caused the ships under the command of Sir Hugh Willoughby to be protected with thin sheets of lead to guard against the worm "which many times pearceth and eateth through the strongest oake";[1] but I cannot discover that this example was continued, and it is at least certain that the vessels commanded by Dampier and his buccaneering companions breasted the surge with no other coating on their bottoms than pitch and tallow. Hence in all long voyages there was frequent occasion to careen, practicable only by tedious deviation

[1] Hackluyt, i. 243. There is also a reference to sheathing in Sir Richard Hawkins's *Observations* in Purchas, vol. iv. p. 1387. In 1673 an order was issued by the Lord High Admiral to sheath some of the ships of war with lead; but on Sir John Narborough a few years afterwards objecting to it, the practice was discontinued.—See Schomberg's *Naval Chronology*, vol. i. 75.

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in search of a convenient place, and by wearisome detention, that the hull might be listed over and the accumulation of shells and weed removed. Another formidable difficulty lay in the scurvy. This is a distemper still with us, but in those days it was incredibly fateful. Few ships from Europe managed to pass the Horn without the loss of half, and often two-thirds, of their crews from this dreadful scourge. The "chirurgeons" could do nothing. There was no remedy but to bring up off some fruitful coast and send the men ashore. Whenever practicable this was done; but often it happened that the ship's company were dying in fives and tens every day, with the vessel herself a thousand miles out upon the ocean. The old navigators overdid their pickling. The brine they soaked their meat in made it harder and less nourishing than mahogany before they were out of the English Channel. Of all the wonders of the early voyages none surprises me so much as the capacity of the people to subsist upon the victuals shipped for them.

In Dampier's time navigation as an art had scarcely made a stride since the days of Columbus and the Portuguese discoverers. The instruments for measuring the sun's altitude were the astrolabe, the cross or forestaff, and Davis's backstaff,—engines for mensuration ludicrously primitive, as will be supposed when viewed side by side with the sextant of to-day. The mariner made shift with these contrivances to determine his latitude within a degree or two, but he had no means of ascertaining his longitude. There were no chronometers, there was no portable Greenwich time, no aids whatever towards the solution of what was regarded down to the

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days of Maskelyne and the Commissioners of Longitude as the greatest marine problem that ever perplexed the mind. Apparently the old practice was to run down the parallels and then make direct easting or westing for the desired destination. Or they took "a departure," as it was called, from any point of land, and calculated the meridians by the log. Or, as an alternative, the early navigators employed dead-reckoning, as we still practise it—that is, they found out a vessel's place on the chart by putting down her rate of sailing as it was to be ascertained at regular intervals by "heaving the log," and by allowing for leeway and difference of courses. In Captain Thomas James's *Strange and Dangerous Voyage in the years* 1631-32[1] there is included a list of the instruments provided by him for his undertaking to discover the north-west passage into the South Sea. A few of the items will furnish the reader with a tolerable idea of the primitive character of the nautical implements with which the mariner in the days of James, and later yet in the days of Dampier, embarked on his voyages into the remotest parts of the world in quest of new lands or in search of short cuts. James begins the list with "a quadrant of old-seasoned pear-tree wood, artificially made and with all care possible divided with diagonals, even to minutes. It was a four-foot at least (semi-diameter)." Next: "An equilateral triangle of light wood, whose radius was five-foot at least, and divided out of Petiscus's table of tangents." "A quadrant of two-foot semi-diameter of light wood and with like care projected." Then: "Four staves for

[1] Preserved in Churchill's *Collections of Voyages and Travels*, 1704, vol. ii.

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taking altitudes and distances in the heavens." The captain also took with him "a staff of seven-feet long, whose transom was four-foot divided into equal parts by way of diagonals that all the figures in a radius of 10,000 might be taken out actually." "Another of six-foot near as convenient and in that manner to be used. Mr. Gunter's cross-staff, three Jacob's staves projected after a new manner and truly divided after the table of tangents, two of Mr. Davis's backstaves with like care made and divided." These were the captain's instruments for measuring the height of the sun. Other items comprised "six meridian compasses ingeniously made; four needles in square boxes; four special needles (which my good friends Mr. Allen and Mr. Marre gave me) of six inches diameter, and toucht curiously with the best loadstone in England; a loadstone to refresh any of these if occasion were, whose poles were marked for fear of mistaking." Further, Captain James carried a watch-clock, "a table every-day calculated, correspondent to the latitude according to Mr. Gunter's directions in his book, the better to keep our time and our compass to judge of our course." A chestful of mathematical books, the Collections of Purchas and Hackluyt, and "two pair of curious globes."

Such was the scientific equipment of a man bound on a Polar voyage in the year 1632. It is not to be supposed that such mariners as Dampier and his buccaneering associates went half as well furnished. Indeed their poverty in this direction was so great that one may read here and there of their employing their leisure on shipboard in making quadrants to replace those which were lost or worn out. Their Norie, Raper,

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and Nautical Almanac in one was the crude *Speculum Nauticum* of Wagener, made English by Anthony Ashley in 1588, and universally known by the seamen in those days as *Waggoner*.[1] Sir Thomas Browne, writing in 1664 to his son Thomas, a naval officer, says, "*Waggoner* you will not be without, which will teach the particular coasts, depths of roades, and how the land riseth upon the several points of the compass." It will not be supposed that *Waggoner's* instructions were very trustworthy. The art of surveying was scarcely understood; charts even in Dampier's time were absurdly ill-digested, and portions of the world are barely recognisable in the grotesque tracings. Therefore it happened that the early mariner was forced to depend upon his own judgment and experience to a degree scarce realisable in these days of exact science and matured inventions. He hardly understood what was signified by the variation of the compass, and there was very little outside the Pole Star that was not doubtful. But happily for him there was no obligation of hurry. There was no managing owner to worry him. Prompt despatch was no condition of the charter-party. His was the day of ambling, and he was happy if he could confirm with his lead and log-line the reckonings he arrived at with his forestaff.

It is proper to remember all these conditions of the sea-vocation in reviewing the life of William Dampier. The habit of self-reliance makes the character of the

[1] The buccaneers had "Waggoners" of their own. One was compiled by Basil Ringrose, who called it the *South Sea Waggoner* (*circa* 1682). Another by Captain Hack, the author of a *History of the Buccaneers*, was published in or about 1690.

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sea-worthies of his age admirable, and it qualified them for their great undertakings and achievements. They were helped with nothing from science that can be mentioned with gravity. The ocean was to them as blank as it looks to the landsman's eye, and it was their business to find out the roads to the wonders and mysteries which lay hidden leagues down behind its familiar shining line. If a sailor nowadays is at fault he can seek and find the hints and assurances he desires in twenty directions. He has Admiralty charts of incomparable accuracy. He has a deep-sea lead with which he can feel the ground whilst his ship moves through the water at fourteen knots an hour. He has instruments for indicating the angle to which his vessel rolls, and for showing him instantly her trim as she sits upon the water. He has a dial that registers on deck, under his eye, the number of miles his ship has made since any hour he chooses to time her from. His chronometer may be accepted as among the most perfect examples of human skill. Dampier and such as he wanted all these adjuncts to their calling. But it cannot be disputed that they were the better sailors for the very poverty of their equipment in this way. It forced upon them faith in nothing but their own observation, so that there never was a race of sailors who kept their eyes wider open and examined more closely those points which have long since slided into the dull prosaics of the deep. No one can follow them without wonder and admiration. We find them in crafts of forty, twenty, even ten tons—boats half-decked and undecked—exploring the frozen silence of the North Pole, beating to the westward against the fierce surge of the Horn, seeking

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land amidst the vast desolation of the southern ocean, and making new history for their country upon the coast of North America and in the waters of the Mozambique. Their lion-hearts carry them all over the world, and they have nothing to help them but the lead-line over the side and a quadrant big enough to serve as a gallows. Nor was the ocean quite as it is now. In Dampier's time it was still gloomy with mysteries, and there lingered many a dark and terrifying superstition, whose origin was to be traced to those early Portuguese and Spanish sailors who chanted a litany when they saw St. Elmo's Fire glittering at the masthead, and exorcised the demon of the waterspout by elevating their swords in the form of crosses. The mermaid still rose in the tranquil blue waters alongside, and with impassioned eyes and white and wooing arms courted the startled seaman to share her coral pavilion at the bottom of the sea. The enchanted island, steeped in the purple splendour of a radiance that owed nothing of its glory to the heavens, was yet to be discovered by seeking. The darkness of the storm was thronged with gigantic shadowy shapes of fleeting spirits. Amid the tranquillity of the midnight calm, dim fiery figures of undeterminable proportions floated in the black profound, and voices as of human creatures could be heard out of the hush on the deep syllabling the names of the listening and affrighted crew. It is true that the Jack of Dampier's time was not so amazingly superstitious as we find him in the pages of Purchas and Hackluyt. He was not quite so young-eyed as the ancient mariner of the Elizabethan and preceding ages. Nevertheless he was still exceedingly credulous, and he never embarked

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on a voyage into distant parts without a mind prepared for marvels of many sorts. Also let us remember the shadowiness of the globe whose oceans he was to navigate, the vagueness of countries now as well known to us as our own island home. Australia was rising upon the gaze of the world like a new moon, the greater part of whose disk lies in black shadow. Islands which now have their newspapers and their hotels were uncharted, were less real than the white shoulders of clouds dipping upon the sea-line. Of countries whose coast had been sighted, but whose interiors were unknown, wild guesses at the wonders within resulted in hair-stirring imaginations. These and more than there is room to name are conditions of the early mariner's vocational life, which we must take care to bear in mind as we accompany him in his adventures, or certainly we shall fail to compass the full significance of his magnificent resolution, his incomparable spirit, and his admirable intrepidity.

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CHAPTER II

1652-1681

DAMPIER'S EARLY LIFE—CAMPECHÉ—HE JOINS THE BUCCANEERS

THERE is an account of Dampier's early life written by himself in the second volume of his Travels. I do not know that anything is to be added to what he there tells us. A man should be accepted as an authority on his own career when it comes to a question of dates and adventures. The interest of this sailor's life really begins with his own account of his first voyage round the world; and though he is a very conspicuous figure in English maritime history, the position he occupies scarcely demands the curious and minute inquiry into those parts of his career on which he is silent that we should bestow on the life of a great genius.

William Dampier was born at East Coker in the year 1652. His parents intended him for a commercial life, but the idea of shopkeeping was little likely to suit the genius of a lad who was a rover in heart whilst he was still in petticoats; and on the death of his father and mother his friends, finding him bent upon an ocean life, bound him apprentice to the master of a ship belonging to Weymouth. This was in or about the year 1669.

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With this captain he made a short voyage to France, and afterwards proceeded to Newfoundland in the same ship, being then, as he tells us, about eighteen years of age. The bitter cold of Newfoundland proved too much for his seafaring resolutions, and, procuring the cancellation of his indentures, he went home to his friends. But the old instinct was not to be curbed. Being in London some time after his return from the Newfoundland voyage, he heard of an outward-bound East Indiaman named the *John and Martha*, the master of which was one Earning. The idea of what he calls a "warm voyage" suited him. He offered himself as a foremast hand and was accepted. The voyage was to Bantam, and he was away rather longer than a year, during which time he says he kept no journal, though he enlarged his knowledge of navigation. The outbreak of the Dutch war seems to have determined him to stay at home, and he spent the summer of the year 1672 at his brother's house in Somersetshire. He soon grew weary of the shore, and enlisted on board the *Royal Prince*, commanded by the famous Sir Edward Spragge,[1] under whom he served during a part of the year 1673. He fought in two engagements, and then falling sick a day or two before the action in which Sir Edward lost his life (August 11th), he was sent on board the hospital ship, whence he was removed to Harwich. Here he lingered for a great while in suffering, and at last, to recover his health, went to his brother's house. As he gained strength so did his longing for the sea increase upon him. His inclination was soon to be humoured, for there lived near his brother one Colonel Hellier, who, taking a fancy to Dampier, offered him the

[1] Dampier calls him Spragg, others Sprague.

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management of a plantation of his in Jamaica under a person named Whalley; for which place he started in the *Content* of London, Captain Kent master, he being then twenty-two years old. Lest he should be kidnapped and sold as a servant on his arrival, he agreed with Captain Kent to work his passage out as a seaman. They sailed in the beginning of the year 1674, but the date of their arrival at Jamaica is not given.

His life on that island is not of much interest. He lived with Whalley for about six months, and then agreed with one Captain Heming to manage his plantation on the north side of the island; but repenting his resolution, he took passage on board a sloop bound to Port Royal. He made several coasting voyages in this way, by which he tells us he became intimately acquainted with all the ports and bays of Jamaica, the products and manufactures of the island, and the like. In this sort of life he spent six or seven months, and then shipped himself aboard one Captain Hudsel, who was bound to the Bay of Campeché to load logwood. They sailed from Port Royal in August 1675; their cargo to purchase logwood was rum and sugar. There were about two hundred and fifty men engaged in cutting the wood, and these fellows gladly exchanged the timber for drink. They were nearly all Englishmen, and on the vessel dropping anchor, numbers of them flocked aboard clamorous for liquor. "We were but 6 Men and a Boy in the Ship," says Dampier, "and all little enough to entertain them: for besides what Rum we sold by the Gallon or Ferkin, we sold it made into Punch, wherewith they grew Frolicksom." It was customary in those times to shoot off guns when healths were drunk, but in Dampier's craft there was nothing

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but small-arms, "and therefore," he says, "the noise was not very great at a distance, but on Board the Vessels we were loud enough till all our Liquor was spent." Dampier was well entertained by these fellows ashore. They hospitably received him in their wretched huts, and regaled him with pork and peas and beef and dough-boys. He thought this logwood-cutting business so profitable, and the life so free and pleasant, that he secretly made up his mind to return to Campeché after his arrival at Jamaica. Having filled up with wood, they sailed in the latter end of September, and not very long afterwards narrowly escaped being wrecked on the Alacran Reef, a number of low, sandy islands situated about twenty-five leagues from the coast of Yucatan. The vessel was a ketch, the weather very dirty. Dampier was at the helm, or whipstaff as the tiller was called, and describes the vessel as plunging and labouring heavily: "Not going ahead," he says, "but tumbling like an egg-shell in the sea." In spite of their being in the midst of a dangerous navigation, the crew, finding the weather improving, lay down upon the deck and fell asleep. The stout build of the round-bowed craft saved her, otherwise it is highly improbable that anything more would ever have been heard of William Dampier.

Young as he was, his powers of observation, the accuracy of his memory, and what I may call the sagacity of his inquisitiveness, are forcibly illustrated in this passage of his account of his early life. Even while his little ship is bumping ashore, and all hands are running about thinking their last moment arrived, Dampier is taking a careful view of the sandy islands, observing the several depths of water, remarking the various channels, and mentally

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noting the best places in which to drop anchor. He has a hundred things to tell us about the rats and sea-fowl he saw there, of the devotion of the booby to its young, of the sharks, sword-fish, and "nurses," of the seals, and the Spaniard's way of making oil of their fat. In this little voyage Dampier and his mates suffered a very great deal of hardship. They ran short of provisions, and must have starved but for two barrels of beef which had formed a portion of their cargo for purposes of trucking, but which proved so rotten that nobody would buy them. Of this beef they boiled every day two pieces; their peas were consumed and their flour almost gone, and in order to swallow the beef they were forced to cut it into small bits after it was cooked, and then to boil it afresh in water thickened with a little flour. This savoury broth they ate with spoons. Speaking of this trip Dampier says: "I think never any Vessel before nor since made such traverses in coming out of the *Bay* as we did; having first blundered over the *Alcrany Riff*, and then visited those islands; from thence fell in among the *Colorado Shoals*, afterwards made a trip to *Grand Caymanes;* and lastly visited *Pines*, tho' to no purpose. In all these Rambles we got as much experience as if we had been sent out on a design."

They were thirteen weeks on their way, and eventually anchored at Nigril. Here occurred an incident curiously illustrative of the customs and habits of nautical men in the good old times. Their vessel was visited by Captain Rawlings, commander of a small New England craft, and one Mr. John Hooker, a logwood-cutter. These men were invited into the cabin, and a great bowl of punch

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was brewed to regale them as well as their entertainers. Dampier says there might be six quarts in it. Mr. Hooker, being drunk to by Captain Rawlings, lifted the bowl to his lips, and pausing a moment to say that he was under an oath to drink but three draughts of strong liquor a day, he swallowed the whole without a breath: "And so," adds Dampier, "making himself drunk, disappointed us of our expectations till we made another bowl." Six quarts equal twenty-four glasses. Probably no bigger drink than this is on record! But those were days when men mixed gunpowder with brandy, and honestly believed themselves the stouter-hearted for the dose.

On the vessel's arrival at Port Royal the crew were discharged. Dampier, whose hankering was after the logwood trade, embarked as passenger on board a vessel bound to Campeché, and sailed about the middle of February 1776. He went fully provided for the toilsome work—that is to say, with hatchets, axes, a kind of long knives which he calls "macheats," saws, wedges, materials for a house, or, as he terms it, a pavilion to sleep in, a gun, ammunition, and so forth. His account of the origin and growth of the business he had now entered upon is interesting. The Spaniards had long known the value of the logwood, and used to cut it down near a river about thirty miles from Campeché, whence they loaded their ships with it. The English, after possessing themselves of Jamaica, whilst cruising about in the Gulf, frequently encountered many vessels freighted with this wood; but being ignorant of the value of such cargoes, they either burnt or sent the ships adrift, preserving only the nails and iron-work. At last one Captain James,

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having captured a big vessel full of wood, navigated her to England with the intention of fitting her out as a privateer. He valued his prize's cargo so lightly that on the way home he consumed a portion of it as fuel. On his arrival he, to his great surprise, was offered a large sum for the remainder. This being noised about started the trade amongst the English. Of course the Spaniards opposed the cutting down of the trees, and sent soldiers to protect their property; but the English speedily learnt to recognise the timber as it grew, and, hunting for it elsewhere, met with large forests, and so without regard to the Spaniards they settled down to the trade and did pretty well at it. The work previous to the arrival of Dampier employed nearly three hundred men who had originally been privateersmen and gained a living by plundering the Spaniards, but who, on peace being made with Spain, lost their occupation and were driven to logwood-cutting by hunger. But their tastes as pirates remained tenacious, and perhaps by way of keeping their hand in, they formed into little troops, attacked and plundered the adjacent Indian towns, brought away the women and sent the men to Jamaica to be sold as slaves. Dampier further informs us that these privateersmen had not "forgot their old drinking bouts," but would "still spend thirty or forty pounds at a sitting on board the ships that came hither from Jamaica, carousing and firing off guns three and four days together." Eventually their evil habits led to their ruin, for the Spaniards finding them nearly continually drunk, fell upon them one by one, seizing them chiefly in their huts, where they lay stupefied with liquor, and carried them to prison or to a servitude harder than slavery. Logwood was then worth

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fourteen or fifteen pounds a ton. The toil must have been great, for some of the trees were upwards of six feet round, and the labourer had to cut them into logs small enough to enable a man to carry a bundle of them. Dampier speaks also of the bloodwood which fetched thirty pounds a ton, but he does not tell us that he dealt with it. He speedily found employment amongst the logwood-cutters. On his arrival he met with six men who had one hundred tons of the wood ready cut, but not yet removed to the creek side. These fellows offered Dampier pay at the rate of a ton of the wood per month to help them to transport what they had cut to the water. The work was laborious. They had not only to transport the heavy timber, but to make a road to enable them to convey it to the place of shipment. They devoted five days a week to this work, and on Saturdays employed themselves in killing cattle for food. During one of these hunting excursions Dampier came very near to perishing through losing his way. He started out alone with a musket on his shoulder, intending to kill a bullock on his own account, and wandered so far into the woods that he lost himself. After much roaming he sat down to wait till the sun should decline, that he might know by the course it took how to direct his steps. The wild pines appeased his craving for drink, otherwise he must have perished of thirst. At sunset he started afresh, but the night, coming down dark, forced him to stop. He lay on the grass at some distance from the woods, in the hope that the breeze of wind that was blowing would keep the mosquitoes from him; "but in vain," says he, "for in less than an Hour's time I was so persecuted, that though I endeavoured to keep them off by fanning

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myself with boughs and shifting my Quarters 3 or 4 times; yet still they haunted me so that I could get no Sleep." At daybreak he struck onwards, and after walking a considerable distance, to his great joy saw a pole with a hat upon it, and a little farther on another. These were to let him know that his companions understood that he was lost, and that at sunrise they would be out seeking him. So he sat down to wait for them; for though by water the distance to the settlement was only nine miles, the road by land was impracticable by reason of the dense growths coming down to the very side of the creek where Dampier sat waiting. Within half an hour after his arrival at the poles with the hats upon them, "his Consorts came," he says, "bringing every Man his Bottle of Water, and his Gun, both to hunt for Game and to give me notice by Firing that I might hear them; but I have known several Men lost in the like manner and never heard of afterwards." At the expiration of the month's agreement he received his ton of logwood, and was made free of the little colony of cutters. Some of the men, quitting the timber-cutting, went over to Beef Island to kill bullocks for their hides, but Dampier remained behind with a few others to cut more logwood. He worked laboriously, but his career in this line of business was ended not long afterwards by the most violent storm "that," he says, "was ever known in those Parts." He has described this storm in his *Discourse of Winds*. He there says: "The Flood still increased and ran faster up the Creek than ever I saw it do in the greatest Spring Tide, which was somewhat strange, because the wind was at South, which is right off the Shore on this Coast. Neither did the Rain

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anything abate, and by 10 a Clock in the Morning the Banks of the Creeks were all overflowing. About 12 at Noon we brought our Canao to the side of our Hut and fastened it to the Stump of a Tree that stood by it; that being the only refuge that we could now expect; for the Land a little way within the Banks of the Creek is much lower than where we were: so that there was no walking through the Woods because of the Water. Besides the Trees were torn up by the Roots and tumbled so strangely a-cross each other that it was almost impossible to pass through them." Their huts were demolished, their provisions ruined. It was in vain to stay, so the four men who formed Dampier's party embarked in their canoe and rowed over to One-Bush-Key, about sixteen miles from the creek. There had been four ships riding off that key when the storm began, but only one remained, and from her they could obtain no refreshment of any kind, though they were liberal in their offers of money. So they steered away for Beef Island, and on approaching it observed a ship blown ashore amongst the trees with her flag flying over the branches. Her people were in her, and Dampier and his companions were kindly received by them. Whilst on Beef Island he was nearly devoured by an alligator. He and his comrades started to kill a bullock. In passing through a small savannah they detected the presence of an alligator by the strong, peculiar scent which the huge reptile throws upon the air, and on a sudden Dampier stumbled against the beast and fell over it. He shouted for help, but his comrades took to their heels. He succeeded in regaining his legs, then stumbled and fell over the animal a second time; "and a third time also," he says, "expect-

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ing still when I fell down to be devoured." He contrived to escape at last, but he was so terrified that he tells us he never cared for going through the water again so long as he was in the Bay.

Much of his narrative here is devoted to accurate and well-written descriptions of the character of the country, and of its animals, reptiles, and the like. There is an amusing quaintness in some of his little pictures, as, for instance: "The Squash is a four-footed Beast, bigger than a Cat: Its Head is much like a Foxes; with short Ears and a long Nose. It has pretty short Legs and sharp Claws; by which it will run up trees like a Cat. The skin is covered with short, fine Yellowish Hair. The flesh is good, sweet, wholesome Meat. We commonly skin and roast it; and then we call it pig; and I think it eats as well. It feeds on nothing but good Fruit; therefore we find them most among the Sapadillo-Trees. This Creature never rambles very far: and being taken young, will become as tame as a Dog; and be as roguish as a Monkey."

The minuteness of his observation is exhibited in a high degree in his account of the beasts, birds, and fish of Campeché and the district. He uses no learned terms. A child might get to know more from him about the thing he describes than from a dozen pages of modern writing on the subject supplemented even by illustrations. It was wonderland to him, as it had been to other plain and sagacious sailors before him. His accounts remind us again and again of the exquisitely *naïve* but admirably faithful descriptions of beasts and fish by the navigators whose voyages are found in the collections of Hackluyt and Purchas.

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It is not very long after he had quitted Campeché that we find him associating with privateers, and becoming one of their number. He writes of this in a half-apologetic manner, complaining of failure through a violent storm and of a futile cruise lasting for several months, and talks of having been driven at last to seek subsistence by turning pirate. There is no hint in his previous narrative of any leanings this way. Probably thoughts of the golden chances of the rover might have been put into his head by chats with the logwood-cutters. The Spaniard had long been the freebooter's quarry. His carracks and galleons, laden almost to their ways with the treasure of New Spain, had handsomely lined the pockets of the marauding rogues, and such was the value of the booty that scores of them might have set up as fine gentlemen in their own country on their shares but for their trick of squandering in a night what they had taken months to gain at the hazard of their lives. The temptation was too much for Dampier; besides, he was already seasoned to hardships of even a severer kind than was promised by a life of piracy. For, as we have seen, he had outweathered the bitter cold of Newfoundland, he had worked as a common sailor before the mast, he had served against the Dutch, he had knocked about in Mexican waters in a vessel as commodious and seaworthy as a Thames barge, and he was now fresh from the severe discipline of the logwood trade. His associates consisted of sixty men, who were divided between two vessels. Their first step was to attack the fort of Alvarado, in which enterprise they lost ten or eleven of their company. The inhabitants, who had

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plenty of boats and canoes, carried away their money and effects before the fort yielded, and as it was too dark to pursue them, the buccaneers were satisfied to rest quietly during the night. Next morning they were surprised by the sight of seven ships which had been sent from Vera Cruz. They got under-weigh and cleared for action. But they had no heart to fight; which is intelligible enough when we learn that the Spanish admiral's ship mounted ten guns and carried a hundred men; that another had four guns and eighty men; the rest sixty or seventy men apiece, well armed, whilst the bulwarks of the ships were protected with bulls' hides breast-high. Fortunately for. them, the Spaniards had no mind to fight either. Some shots were exchanged, and presently the Spanish squadron edged away towards the shore, "and we," says Dampier, "glad of the deliverance, went away to the eastward." How long he remained with the pirates he does not say. Apparently he could not find his account with them. He left them to return to the logwood trade, at which he continued for about twelve more months. He then tells us that he resolved to pay a visit to England with a design of returning again to wood-cutting, which no doubt was proving profitable to him, and accordingly set sail for Jamaica in April 1678. After remaining for a short time at that island he embarked for England, and arrived at the beginning of August.

He did not remain long at home. In the beginning of the year 1679 he sailed for Jamaica in a vessel named the *Loyal Merchant*. He shipped as a passenger, intending when he arrived at Jamaica to proceed to the Bay of Campeché, and there pursue the employment of log-

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wood-cutting. But on his arrival at Port Royal in Jamaica in April 1679, after a good deal of consideration, he made up his mind to delay or abandon his wood-cutting scheme, for he tells us that he remained in that island for the rest of the year in expectation of some other business. Whatever his hopes were they could not have been greatly disappointed, for we read of him as having, whilst in Jamaica, purchased a small estate in Dorsetshire from a person whose title to it he was well assured of. He was then, it now being about Christmas, 1679, about to sail again for England, when a Mr. Hobby persuaded him to venture on a short trading voyage to what was then termed the country of the Mosquitoes, a little nation which he describes as composed of not more than a hundred men inhabiting the mainland between Honduras and Nicaragua. Dampier consented; he and Mr. Hobby set out, and presently dropped anchor in a bay at the west end of Jamaica, where they found a number of privateersmen, including Captains Coxon, Sawkins, and Sharp. These men were maturing the scheme of an expedition of so tempting a character that the whole of Mr. Hobby's men quitted him and went over to the pirates. Dampier stayed with his companion for three or four days, and then joined the pirates also. What became of Mr. Hobby he does not say. There is here a shamefacedness in his avowal not hard to distinguish. Perhaps as he sits writing this narrative he wonders at the irresolution he exhibited, and his curious caprices of decision. He starts for Jamaica to cut logwood at Campeché; on his arrival he changes his mind and prepares for his return; he is then diverted from his intention by Mr. Hobby, with

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whom he embarks on a well-considered adventure, which he relinquishes to become pirate before his associate's ship has fairly got away from Jamaica! It is these sudden changes of front, however, and the unexpected turns of fortune which they produced, which keeps Dampier's narrative sweet with fresh and ever-flowing interest.

His adventures from the date of his leaving Mr. Hobby down to the month of April 1681 he dismisses in a couple of pages. Ringrose, however, has written very fully of the expedition in which Dampier apparently served as a foremast hand, and to the pages of his work it is necessary to turn to obtain the information which Dampier omits.[1] The fleet of the privateers consisted of nine vessels; the largest of them, commanded by Captain Harris, was of the burden of one hundred and fifty tons, mounted twenty-five guns, and carried one hundred and seven men; whilst the smallest, commanded by Captain Macket, was of fourteen tons, her crew consisting of twenty men. They sailed on March 23rd, 1679, for the province of Darien, their designs being, as Ringrose candidly admits, to pillage and plunder in those parts. But they do not appear to have arrived off the coast until April 1680, this being the date given by Ringrose, who says that there they landed three hundred and thirty-one men, leaving a party of sailors behind them to guard their ships. They marched in companies; Captain Bartholomew Sharp's (in whose troop, I take it,

[1] Ringrose's account will be found in *The History of the Bucaniers of America*, 2 vols., 4th edition, 1741, under the section entitled "The dangerous Voyage and bold Adventures of Captain Sharp, Watling, Sawkins, Coxon, and others in the South Sea." It is proper I should state here that the editions of the books I name are those from which I quote.

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was Dampier) carried a red flag, with a bunch of white and green ribands; Captain Richard Sawkins's company exhibited a red flag striped with yellow; the third and fourth, commanded by Captain Peter Harris, bore two cream-coloured flags; the fifth and sixth a red flag each; and the seventh a red colour with yellow stripes, and a hand and sword thereon by way of a device. "All or most of them," adds Ringrose, "were armed with Fuzee, Pistol, and Hanger." This is a description that brings the picture before us. We see these troops of sailors carrying banners, dressed as merchant seamen always were, and still are, in twenty different costumes, lurching along under the broiling equatorial sun, through forests, rivers, and bogs, trusting to luck for a drink of water, and with no better victuals than cakes of bread (four to a man), called by Ringrose "dough-boys," a name that survives to this day, animated to the support of the most extraordinary fatigues, the most venomous country, and the deadliest climate in the world, by dreams of more gold than they would be able to carry away with them.

But the whole undertaking was a failure. They attacked and took the town of Santa Maria, and found the place to consist of a few houses built of cane, with not so much as the value of a single ducat anywhere to be met with. Their disappointment was rendered the keener by the news that three days before their arrival several hundred-weight of gold had been sent away to Panama in one of those ships which were commonly despatched two or three times a year from that city to convey the treasure brought to Santa Maria from the mountains. Their ill-luck, however, hardened them in

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their resolution to attack Panama. The city was a sort of New Jerusalem to the imaginations of these men, who thought of it as half-formed of storehouses filled to their roofs with plate, jewels, and gold. They stayed two days at Santa Maria, and then on April 17th, 1680, embarked in thirty-five canoes and a periagua, and rowed down the river in quest of the South Sea, upon which, as Ringrose puts it, Panama is seated. Their adventures were many; their hardships and distresses such as rendered their energy and fortitude phenomenal even amongst a community who were incomparably gifted with these qualities. Ringrose, whose narrative I follow, was wrecked in the river by the oversetting of his canoe, and came very near to perishing along with a number of his comrades. He fell into the hands of some Spaniards, with whom, as they understood neither English nor French, whilst he was equally ignorant of their tongue, he was obliged to converse in Latin!—a language in which, I suspect, not many mariners of to-day could communicate their distresses. He and his shipmates narrowly escaped torture and a miserable death, and eventually recovering their canoe, they started afresh on their voyage, and were fortunate enough next morning to fall in with the rest of the buccaneers, who had anchored during the night in a deep bay.

Trifling as these incidents are, it is proper to relate them as examples of the life and experiences of Dampier during this period of his career. Unfortunately, until one opens his own books one does not know where to look for him. In whose troop he marched, in whose canoe he sat, in what special adventures he was concerned, whether he was favoured for his intelligence

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above the others by the commanders of the expedition, cannot be ascertained. When Ringrose wrote, Dampier was still a mere privateersman, a foremast hand, a man without individuality enough to arrest the attention of the sturdy, plain, and honest historian of the voyage in which they both took part. Indeed, there is no reason to suppose that Dampier at this time was regarded by his fellows as better than the humblest of the shaggy, sun-blackened men who, with fuzees on their shoulders and pistols in their girdles, tramped in little troops through the swamps and creeks and over the swelling lands of the Isthmus, or who in their deep and narrow canoes floated silent and grim upon the hot and creeping river in search of the unexpectant Don and his almost fabulous wealth.

Dampier introduces a curious story in connection with Panama and the South Seas in his first volume. He says that when he was on board Captain Coxon's ship, there being three or four privateers in company, they captured a despatch boat bound to Cartagena from Porto Bello. They opened many of the letters, and were struck by observing that several of the merchants who wrote from Old Spain exhorted their correspondents at Panama to bear in mind a certain prophecy that had been current in Madrid and other centres for some months past, the tenor of which was—*That there would be English privateers that year in the West Indies, who would make such great discoveries as to open a door into the South Seas.* This door, Dampier says, was the passage overland to Darien through the country of the Indians, a people who had quarrelled with the Spaniards and professed a friendship for the English. At all events, these Indians had been

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for some time inviting the privateers to march across their territory and fall upon the Spaniards in the South Seas. Hence when the letters came into their hands they grew disposed to entertain the Indians' proposal in good earnest, and finally made those attempts to which I have referred in quoting from the pages of Ringrose. The cause of the friendship between the English buccaneers and the Darien Indians is a story of some interest. About fifteen years before Dampier crossed the Isthmus a certain Captain Wright, who was cruising in those waters, met with a young Indian lad paddling about in a canoe. He took him aboard his ship, clothed him, and, with the idea of making an Englishman of him, gave him the name of John Gret. Some Mosquito Indians, however, begged the boy from Captain Wright, who gave him to them. They carried him into their own country, and by and by he married a wife from among them. Through the agency of this John Gret, who always preserved an affection for the English, a friendship was established between the buccaneers and the Indians. Presents were made on each side, and a certain secret signal was concerted whereby the Indians might recognise their English friends. It happened that there was a Frenchman among one of the buccaneering captain's crew. He was artful enough to commit this signal, whatever it was, to memory, and on his arrival at Petit Guavres he communicated what he knew to his countrymen there, and represented the facility with which the South Seas might be entered now that he had the secret of winning over the Indians to help him. On this one hundred and twenty Frenchmen formed themselves into a troop, with the buccaneer, whom Dampier calls Mr. la Sound, as their

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captain, and marched against Cheapo, an attempt that proved unsuccessful, though the simple Indians, believing them to be English, gave them all the assistance that was in their power. "From such small beginnings," adds Dampier, "arose those great stirs that have been since made in the South Seas, viz.: from the Letters we took and from the Friendship contracted with these Indians by means of John Gret. Yet this Friendship had like to have been stifled in its Infancy; for within few months after an English trading Sloop came on this Coast from Jamaica, and John Gret, who by this time had advanced himself as a Grandee amongst these Indians, together with 5 or 6 more of that quality, went off to the Sloop in their long Gowns, as the custom is for such to wear among them. Being received aboard, they expected to find everything friendly, and John Gret talkt to them in English; but these English Men having no knowledge at all of what had happened, endeavoured to make them Slaves (as is commonly done), for upon carrying them to Jamaica they could have sold them for 10 or 12 Pound apiece. But John Gret and the rest perceiving this, leapt all overboard, and were by the others killed every one of them in the Water. The Indians on Shoar never came to the knowledge of it; if they had it would have endangered our Correspondence."

On April 23rd the buccaneers entered the Bay of Panama, and the city, offering a fair and lovely prospect, as Dampier afterwards tells us, lay full in their view. The old town that had been sacked and burnt by Henry Morgan in 1670 lay four miles to the eastward of the new city; but amongst those now suburban ruins the cathedral rose stately and splendid, and Ringrose, en-

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raptured by the sight, vows that the building viewed from the sea might compare in majesty with St. Paul's. The Panama at which Dampier gazed was almost new, built of brick and stone, with eight churches amongst the houses, most of them unfinished. Many of the edifices were three stories high. A strong wall circled the place, crowned with seaward-pointing cannon, and these defences were backed by a garrison of three hundred of the king's soldiers, whilst the city itself supplemented that force by a contribution of eleven hundred militiamen. Such was the Panama of which our handful of audacious buccaneers were coolly proposing the sacking, and doubtless the burning. It seems, however, that when they arrived most of the soldiers were absent, and Ringrose tells us that had they attempted the town at once instead of attacking the ships in the bay, they must have made an easy conquest. The desperate energy, the hot and furious courage, of an earlier race of pirates were wanting in them. They lingered long enough to enable the city to render its capture impracticable, and then, feigning a sentimental interest in the condition of the Indians, they despatched word to the Governor that if he would suffer the natives to enjoy their own "power and liberty," and send to the buccaneers five hundred pieces of eight for each man, and one thousand pieces of eight for each commander, they would desist from further hostilities. A civil message was returned, and they were also asked from whom they received their commission; to which Captain Sawkins responded in a style which he may have borrowed from the tragedies of Nathaniel Lee: "That as yet all his company were not come together; but that when they were come up, we would come and

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visit him at Panama, and bring our commissions on the muzzles of our guns, at which time he should read them as plain as the flame of gunpowder could make them." All this was mere windy, hectoring talk, and nothing followed it. The buccaneers were growing mutinous with famine, and as it was clear there was nothing to be done with Panama, Captain Sawkins, who was chief in command, gave orders to weigh anchor, and the pirates sailed away without a ducat's worth of satisfaction for the prodigious hardships they had endured.

Whilst they lay at anchor before Caboa the two chief commanders, Sawkins and Sharp, went ashore with sixty or seventy men to attack Puebla Nueva. Ringrose dates this attempt May 22nd, 1680. The inhabitants were prepared, and the only issue of a sharp engagement was the death of Captain Sawkins and the loss of several of his people. This defeat led to a mutiny among the buccaneers. Eventually Captain Sharp, who was now chief in command, called the men together and proposed to them to remain in the South Sea and then go home by way of the Horn, adding that he would guarantee that every man who stayed with him should be worth a thousand pounds by the time he arrived in England. This scheme of cruising in the South Sea against the Spaniards had been Sawkins's fixed project, and he was so great a favourite that had he lived it is probable the whole of the crew would have accompanied him; but Sharp did not enjoy the general confidence of his people, and a number of the men sullenly and obstinately refused to linger any longer in these waters. Ringrose was amongst those who were weary of the hazardous and unremunerative adventures of the buccaneers, and

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would have been glad to leave the ship. Had he done so there would have been no record of this voyage of Dampier; but he was wise enough to fear the Indians and to dread the sufferings of an overland journey in the rainy season. He therefore resolved to remain with Captain Sharp, amongst whose adherents was William Dampier. Sixty-three of the men left them, and then on Sunday, June 6th, 1680, Captain Sharp and his people steered away to the southward with the intention of plundering Arica.

On approaching the coast they found the bay guarded by numerous parties of horsemen, whilst the tops of the hills were also lined with men. They withdrew without firing a gun. Better luck, however, befell them on October 29th at Hilo. This place they took without difficulty, and found it stored with quantities of pitch, tar, wine, oil, and flour. The sacking of Hilo was a sort of holiday jaunt for the freebooters, who feasted delightfully on olives, lemons, and limes; on cakes, on flagons of cool wines, on great strawberries, and sweetmeats and other delicacies. As they marched up the valley the Spaniards accompanied their progress upon the hill-tops, and rolled great stones down upon them, but no man was hurt; whilst to the explosion of a single musket every visible Spanish head was instantly ducked out of sight. Much that strikes one as marvellous in the achievements of the buccaneers in the South Sea vanishes when one thinks of the abject cowardice of the American Spaniards. Had their troops been composed of priests and old women, they could not have fled with livelier hysterical nimbleness from the sight of the English colours. The picture is humiliating, though it is not wanting in the ridiculous.

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All through the buccaneering annals, as in Anson's and the voyages of others, one is incessantly meeting with this sort of thing:—A boat filled with armed privateersmen approaches the beach. A numerous party of horsemen, bristling with sabres, lances, and muskets, stand as in a posture to dispute their landing. But as the boat draws near the horsemen retreat, and in no very good order, back to behind the town as the seamen spring ashore. They are finally seen on the summit of a hill in company with several troops of foot soldiers, who, whilst their bands play and their banners proudly flutter, gaze downwards at the twenty or thirty sailors who are firing the houses of their town and lurching seawards with sacks of silver on their backs.

Ringrose calls a halt at the "Isle of Plate," as he writes it, to tell us a little story: "This Island received its Name from Sir *Francis Drake*, and his famous Actions. For it is reported that he here made the Dividend of that vast quantity of Plate which he took in the *Armada* of this sea, distributing it to each Man of his Company by whole Bowls full. The *Spaniards* affirm to this Day that he took at that Time twelvescore Tons of Plate, and sixteen bowls of coined Money a Man; his number being then forty-five Men in all; insomuch that they were forced to heave much of it overboard, because his ship could not carry it all. Hence this Island was called by the *Spaniards* the *Isle of Plate*, from this great Dividend, and by us *Drake's Isle*."

Traditions of this kind were very nicely calculated to keep the buccaneering heart high. Our genial freebooter has also another yarn to spin in connection with this

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coast. He says that in the time of Oliver Cromwell the merchants of Lima fitted out a ship armed with seventy brass guns, with a treasure in her hold of no less than thirty millions of dollars, "all which vast sum of money," he says, "was given by the merchants of Lima, and sent as a present to our Gracious King (or rather his father) who now reigneth, to supply him in his exile and distress, but that this great and rich ship was lost by keeping along the shore in the Bay of Manta above mentioned or thereabouts. The truth whereof is much to be questioned." Be his stories true or false, however, it is pleasant to sail in the company of an old seaman who has an anecdote to fit every bay or headland of the coast along which he jogs. Unhappily Ringrose, who begins very well, drifts fast into the unsuggestive trick of "loggings," telling us in twenty pages at a stretch that on Monday the sun rose at such and such an hour, that on Tuesday it blew a fresh gale, that on Wednesday there was a ring round the moon, that on Thursday they had made thirty leagues in twenty-four hours, and so forth. It is by comparing the best of the early mariners' narratives with Dampier's that one remarks his eminent superiority as a writer, observer, and describer.

As they sailed down the American seaboard they captured a few small vessels, but their booty was inconsiderable. On December 3rd, 1680, they attacked the city of La Serena. They routed the Spaniards, who, in flying, carried away the best of their goods and jewels. An offer of ransom was made, and the price fixed was ninety-five thousand pieces of eight. It was soon rendered plain, however, that the enemy had no intention of paying, whereupon the buccaneers fired every house in the town

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to the end that the whole place might be reduced to ashes. Before the ship sailed she was very nearly burnt by a curious Spanish stratagem. A horse's hide was blown out with wind to the condition of a bladder. A man got upon it and silently paddled himself under the stern of the privateer, between whose rudder and sternpost he crammed a mass of oakum, brimstone, and other combustible matter. This done, he softly fired it with a match and sneaked away ashore. The buccaneers observing the dark mass on the water, concluded it to be a dead horse, and gave it no particular heed. On a sudden the alarm of fire was raised; the rudder was seen to be burning and the ship was full of smoke. After some trouble the flames were extinguished, and then suspecting some stratagem in the object they had previously lightly glanced at, they sent the boat ashore, where the puffed-out hide was found with a match burning at both ends of it.

By Christmas Day they were at anchor off the Island of Juan Fernandez. It is noteworthy that Ringrose, in his journal under date of January 3rd, says that their pilot told them that many years ago a ship was cast away upon this island and only one man saved, who lived alone upon it for over five years before any vessel came that way to carry him off. It is curious that none of the biographers of Defoe should refer to this statement in dealing with the inspirations of the great writer's masterpiece. Whilst lying at this island there was trouble amongst the men, which resulted in Captain Sharp being deposed. A number of the crew wanted to go home at once; others were for remaining in those seas until they had got more money. A man

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named John Watling, an old privateer and a seaman of experience, was chosen in the room of Sharp. It was shortly after this that the buccaneers were alarmed by the unexpected apparition of three men-of-war. They instantly slipped their cables and stood out to sea, leaving behind them in their hurry that famous Mosquito Indian, of whom it is uncertain whether it was to his or to Selkirk's adventures that Defoe owed the idea of Robinson Crusoe. The vessels which surprised them were large and heavily armed, one of them being eight hundred and another six hundred tons. They hoisted the "bloody flag," as it was called, meaning that no quarter would be given. The buccaneers did the same, but they were in truth very unwilling to fight. Watling, indeed, either could not or would not dissemble his fears. Fortunately the Spaniards proved thorough cowards. Despite the bluster of their no-quarter signal flying at the masthead, they never offered to approach the privateer, which, glad enough to escape, next day stood away north-east for Arica.

I will not charge Watling with cowardice, but he exhibits a quality of timidity sufficiently accentuated to account for a very cruel disposition. Of this man, who had manifested many signs of alarm at sight of the Spanish ships-of-war, a black act of wickedness is recorded a few days later. Amongst the prisoners on board was an old white-haired Spaniard. Watling questioned him about Arica, and believing that he lied in his answers ordered him to be shot. The former commander, Captain Sharp, vehemently opposed the execution of this cruel sentence, but finding his appeal disregarded he plunged his hands in water and,

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washing them, exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I am clear of the blood of this old man, and I will warrant you a hot day for this piece of cruelty whenever we come to fight at Arica." The prophecy was fulfilled. On January 13th, 1680, the buccaneers were off that town, and ninety-two men going ashore attacked the place with incredible fury. We read of them filling every street in the city with dead bodies. In a short time Captain Watling was shot through the heart, whilst there were slain besides two quartermasters and so many of the men that further efforts were rendered hopeless. The survivors appealed to Captain Sharp to lead them out of their difficulties and get them back to the ship. The enemy surrounded them, they were in great disorder, and there was no one to command them. Sharp, bitterly resenting their behaviour to him, which had led to his being supplanted by Watling, hesitated. "But," says Ringrose, "at our earnest request and petition he took up the command-in-chief again, and began to distribute his orders for our safety." They succeeded in fighting their way to the beach, and got on board at ten o'clock at night, after a desperate battle that had lasted the whole day. On putting to sea again there was much mutinous growling, and when off the Island of Plata, on April 17th, 1681, the quarrels rose to such a pitch that there was nothing for it but separation. The trouble lay in a number of the men, now that Watling was dead, desiring the reappointment of Sharp. This was warmly opposed by others. The matter was put to the vote, and the Sharpites proving the more numerous, the dissentients agreed to leave them—the arrangement being that the majority should keep the

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ship, whilst the others should take the long-boat and canoes and return by way of the Isthmus, or seek their fortunes as they chose in other directions. The outvoted party numbered forty-seven men, one of whom was William Dampier.

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CHAPTER III

1681–1691

DAMPIER'S FIRST VOYAGE ROUND THE WORLD[1]

"APRIL 17, 1681," writes Dampier, "about Ten a Clock in the morning being 12 leagues N.-W. from the Island *Plata*, we left Captain *Sharp* and those who were willing to go with him in the Ship, and imbarqued into our Launch and Canoas, designing for the River of *Santa Maria* in the Gulf of *St. Michael*, which is about 200 leagues from the Isle of *Plata*." The boats which carried them were a launch and two canoes; and their provisions consisted of a quantity of flour mixed with twenty or thirty pounds of powdered chocolate. That no man should venture the crossing of the Isthmus on foot who, by health or feebleness of will, might prove unequal to

[1] "*A New Voyage Round the World*, describing particularly the Isthmus of America; several Coasts and Islands in the West Indies; the Isles of Cape Verd; the Passage by Terra del Fuego; the South Sea coasts of Chili, Peru, and Mexico; the Isle of Guam, one of the Ladrones, Mindanao, and other Philippine and East India Islands, near Cambodia, China, Formosa, Laconia, Celebes, etc.; New Holland, Sumatra, Nicobar Isles; the Cape of Good Hope, and Santa Hellena. Their Soil, Rivers, Harbours, Plants, Fruits, Animals, and Inhabitants. Their Customs, Religion, Government, Trade, etc." By Captain William Dampier. Fourth Edition, 1699. This is vol. i. of the Travels.

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the march, it was settled at the start that any one who faltered on the journey overland should be at once shot to death: "For," says Dampier, "we knew that the Spaniards would soon be after us, and one man falling into their hands might be the ruin of us all by giving an account of our strength and condition; yet this would not deter 'em from going with us." When abreast of Cape Passao they captured a small vessel and sailed to Cape St. Lorenzo, where they disembarked, after removing their provisions and clothes and scuttling their little ship. It was now May 1st, 1681.

The march of Dampier and his companions across the Isthmus of Panama is a feat that ranks amongst the most memorable of the traditions of travel and adventure. The qualities of the climate of that part of the world have found emphasis in our time in published accounts of the mortality among the people employed out there on the great French engineer's scheme of a canal. The land is watered by numbers of rivers filled with alligators; it is darkened and often rendered impenetrable by dense growths of tropical vegetation crowded with snakes; and in many places it is blocked by barriers of hills and mountains belted with miasmatic vapours. Our little company of buccaneers crossed the Isthmus in twenty-three days, in which time, according to Dampier's account, they travelled one hundred and ten miles. Their adventures were few, but the hardships constant and severe. For the most part they slept all night in the open, and repeatedly arose in the morning from their beds of mire with clothes saturated by storms of rain. Their surgeon, Lionel Wafer, was badly hurt in the knee by the explosion of a parcel of gunpowder,—an accident that gave his com-

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panions much anxiety, "being lyable ourselves every moment to misfortune," says Dampier, "and none to look after us but him." On several occasions many of them were nearly drowned whilst fording rivers swollen with rains. The difficulties in the road of their progress may be gathered from a single incident. They had arrived at the banks of a river which they were obliged to cross. The water was deep and the current ran swiftly. It was proposed that those who could swim should assist those who were helpless in this way to the opposite bank; but then, how were they to transport the guns, provisions, and other articles that they carried? They decided to send a man over with a line, who, by means of it, would be able to haul the goods across, and then drag those ashore who could not swim. A fellow named Gayny secured the end of the line around his neck and plunged into the river, but the current kinked and entangled the rope in some way and threw the swimmer on his back. He had slung a bag containing three hundred dollars over his shoulder, and this weight, helped by the drag of the line, drew the unfortunate man under, and he was seen no more. They finally succeeded in crossing by felling a tall tree, which happily spanned the river and served them as a bridge. Their food consisted of fish and such animals as they could contrive to shoot, particularly monkeys, whose flesh they ate with relish. It was not until May 23rd that they came in sight of the Atlantic, which it was then the custom to speak of as the North Sea, and the next day they went on board a French privateer commanded by a Captain Tristian. Some of their comrades had died by the way, and some had been left behind. Amongst the

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latter was Wafer, the surgeon, who a few weeks afterwards was met by Dampier while cruising in the neighbourhood of La Sound's Key. Some Indians came aboard, and brought with them the surgeon and survivors of the others who had been left on the Isthmus. "Mr. Wafer," says Dampier, "wore a clout about him, and was painted like an Indian; and he was some time aboard before I knew him."[1]

Captain Tristian, having Dampier and his comrades in the ship, set sail, and arrived in two days at Springer's Quay, where they found eight privateers lying at anchor. Four of them were English; two of ten guns each, and both carrying one hundred men; a third of four guns and forty men. The others were less formidable. The Dutch vessel mounted four guns and carried sixty men, and was commanded by one Captain Yanky. The Frenchmen were respectively of eight guns and forty men, and six guns and seventy men. Here, by guessing at the crews of the smaller ships, we arrive at a body of pirates numbering between five and six hundred fearless, determined, ferocious ruffians! It is conceivable that the Spaniards in those waters should have lived in a state of terror. The wonder is that the swarms of miscreants who preyed upon them should have left them a house to dwell in or a ducat to conceal.

[1] Wafer afterwards published an account of his adventures in "*A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America;* giving an account of the author's abode there; the form and make of the Country, Coasts, Hills, Rivers, etc. Woods, Soil, Weather, etc. Trees, Fruit, Beasts, Birds, Fish, etc. The Indian Inhabitants, their Features, Complexions, etc.; their Manners, Customs, Employments, Marriages, Feasts, Hunting, Computation, Language, etc. With remarkable Occurrences in the South Sea and elsewhere." It is a tedious book.

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After many debates it was agreed amongst the masters and crews of these vessels to attack a town the name of which Dampier says he has forgotten. The vessel into which our hero found himself drafted was a French craft of eight guns and forty men, commanded by a man named Archemboe. The fleet weighed, but during the night they were scattered by a hard gale, and when day broke Archemboe's ship was alone. Dampier, with others of his comrades who were with Archemboe, speedily learnt to hate their French associates. The sailors were utterly worthless in bad, and lazy, lounging loafers in fine, weather: "The saddest creatures that I was ever among," writes Dampier, "but though we had bad weather that required many hands aloft, yet the biggest part of them never stirred out of their hammocks but to eat." Later on they fell in with Captain Wright, who belonged to the fleet, and Dampier's English shipmates induced this man to fit out a prize of his for them; Dampier himself joining Wright, whose vessel, a *barco longo*, mounted four guns and carried fifty men. Shortly after this Wright, in company with the Dutchman, Captain Yanky, started on a cruise along the coast of Cartagena.

Dampier's narrative here is a very close, curious, and interesting description of the islands of this part of the sea and of the shores of the mainland. He also prints pages of notes about the birds common to those parts, the pearl-fishery, and other matters of a like kind. The charm of a sailor-like simplicity is in everything he says. "I have not been curious," he writes in his preface to a *New Voyage Round the World*, "as to the spelling of the Names of Places, Plants, Fruits, Animals, etc., which in

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many of the remoter parts are given at the pleasure of Travellers, and vary according to their different Humours: Neither have I confined myself to such names as are given by Learned Authors, or so much as enquired after them. I write for my Countrymen, and have therefore for the most part used such names as are familiar to our English Seamen and those of our Colonies abroad, yet without neglecting others that occur'd."

Let Dampier's literary defects be what they may, assuredly unintelligibility is not one of them.

The cruise, in a buccaneering sense, was not a profitable one. They captured a few small vessels, but their prizes yielded them little more than some tons of sugar, marmalade, cocoa, hides, and earthenware They then resolved to separate, and after dividing the plunder they parted company, having enough vessels in the shape of prizes to carry them wherever they might choose to go. Twenty of them, amongst whom was Dampier, putting their share of the booty into a small bark, set sail for Virginia and arrived there after an uneventful passage in July, 1682. In this country Dampier lived for thirteen months, but of his life he tells nothing, merely hinting that a great many troubles befell him.

Amongst the crew of the vessel commanded by the Dutchman, Captain Yanky—one of the piratical commanders with whom Dampier was associated after crossing the Isthmus—there had been a quartermaster named John Cooke, a Creole. On Yanky capturing a Spanish prize, Cooke, by virtue of his position according to the practice of the buccaneers, claimed and obtained command of her. But the privateersmen were of mixed

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nationalities, and the French, growing jealous of the Englishmen, plundered and stripped the men who had been their shipmates and companions-in-arms, and turned them naked ashore. Captain Tristian, however, whose ship, it will be remembered, Dampier and his comrades boarded on the Darien coast, took pity upon the English, and carried ten of them, one of whom was Cooke, to the Island of Tortuga. Whilst they lay there at anchor the English rose, seized Tristian's vessel, and sailing away with her made two captures of importance, one of which they navigated to Virginia, where they arrived in April, 1683. Having sold the cargo of this prize they fitted her out as a privateer, mounting her, Captain Cowley says in his *Voyage*, with eight guns, though Dampier makes the number eighteen. They called her the *Revenge*. Dampier with many others volunteered to sign articles for her, and when she set sail her crew, according to Cowley, consisted of fifty-two, but according to Dampier of seventy men.

The voyage of the *Revenge* was written by Cowley as well as by Dampier—that is to say, a large portion of this voyage is included in Dampier's first volume of his Travels. Cowley's account is very full, wanting indeed the flavour of Dampier's style, and the vitality and archness of his descriptive powers; but in one sense Cowley is more interesting than the other—I mean, that as a freebooter he writes with far more candour than Dampier, whose narratives everywhere repeat by implication the direct apology he makes in the preface to his first volume:

"As for the Actions of the Company, among whom I made the greatest part of this voyage, a Thread of which I have carried on thro' it, 'tis not to divert the

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Reader with them that I mention them, much less that I take any pleasure in relating them: but for method's sake and for the Reader's satisfaction; who could not so well acquiesce in my Description of Places, etc., without knowing the particular Traverses I made among them: nor in these, without an Account of the Concomitant Circumstances. Besides that, I would not prejudice the truth and sincerity of my Relation, tho' by omissions only. And as for the Traverses themselves, they make for the Reader's advantage; however little for mine, since thereby I have been the better inabled to gratify his Curiosity; as one who rambles about a Country can give usually a better account of it, than a Carrier who jogs on to his Inn, without ever going out of his Road."

Cowley had not Dampier's sensitiveness; indeed, he might not have considered his conscience as a buccaneer unduly burdened. It is manifest that as he wrote he was still smarting under the trick that had been put upon him, and to gratify his resentment he related baldly all the truth he could recollect. He had been prevailed upon by Cooke to sail as master in the privateer, which was professedly bound to San Domingo, that her commander might at that island obtain a commission to legalise his acts at sea; but in reality Cooke's first, real, and only design was wholly one of piracy, and nothing was said to Cowley about it until the ship was well clear of the land, when, of course, he was forced to fall in with the scheme.[1] This was in the year 1683. Dampier was now thirty-one years of age, and fairly, but unconsciously,

[1] Cowley's *Voyage:* Harris's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. i., 1744. Also Cowley's Voyage, in Captain William Hack's *Collection of Original Voyages.* 1698.

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started on the first of those voyages which were to make him in his day and to succeeding times one of the most distinguished of the circumnavigators of the globe.

The *Revenge* sailed from Achamack on August 23rd in the year just named. Nothing for many weeks broke the monotony of the passage save the incident of a heavy gale of wind which the vessel encountered off the Cape Verd Islands. Cowley dwells lightly upon this storm as if he would make little or nothing of it, but Dampier insists upon its being the most violent he had ever experienced in any part of the world. Indeed he has preserved an account of it in those chapters in the second volume of his Voyages, which he entitles, "A Discourse of Winds, Breezes, Storms, Tides, and Currents." The nautical reader will, I hope, thank me for transcribing a passage that is more curiously illustrative of the seamanship and sea-technicalities of the period of history to which this narrative belongs than any like account by other hands that I can call to mind.

"If after the Mizan is hall'd up and furled, if then the ship will not wear, we must do it with some Headsail, which yet sometimes puts us to our shifts. As I was once in a very violent storm sailing from *Virginia*, mentioned in my *Voyage Round the World*, we scudded before the Wind and Sea some time, with only our bare Poles; and the ship, by the mistake of him that con'd, broched too, and lay in the Trough of the Sea; which then went so high that every Wave threatn'd to overwhelm us. And indeed if any one of them had broke in on our Deck it might have foundered us. The master,[1] whose fault this was, rav'd like a Mad Man and

[1] Cowley.

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called for an Axe to cut the Mizan Shrouds, and turn the Mizan mast overboard: which indeed might have been an expedient to bring her to her course: The Captain was also of his Mind. Now our Main-yard and Fore-yard were lowered upon a Port-last, as we call it, that is down pretty nigh the Deck, and the Wind blew so fierce that we did not dare to shew any Head-Sail, for they must have blown away if we had, neither could all the men in the ship have furled them again; therefore we had no hopes of doing it that way. I was at this time on the Deck with some others of our Men; and among the rest one Mr. *John Smallbone*, who was the Main instrument at that time of saving us. Come! said he to me, let us go a little way up the Fore-shrouds, it may be that that may make the Ship wear: for I have been doing it before now. He never tarried for an Answer, but run forward presently, and I followed him. We went up the Shrouds Half-mast up, and there we spread abroad the Flaps of our Coats, and presently the Ship wore. I think we did not stay there above 3 Minutes before we gain'd our Point and came down again; but in this time the Wind was got into our Mainsail, and had blown it loose; and tho' the Main-yard was down a Port-last and our Men were got on deck as many as could lye one by another, besides the deck full of Men, and all striving to furl that Sail, yet could we not do it, but were forced to cut it all along by the Head-rope, and so let it fall down on the Deck."

A noticeable thing of their outward run is that they took above five months to sail from the coast of Virginia to abreast of Cape Horn. They got no sights after making Staten Island until they had entered the South

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Sea, and were obliged to grope their way in their square-built, round-bowed, and clumsy old craft past the stormiest headland in the world, through weather blind with snow and black with cloud, and over seas running in mountains to the pressure of five hundred leagues of gale. When to the westward of the Cape they encountered one Captain Eaton in a privateer that had been equipped and despatched from London to plunder the Western American coast, and proceeded with him to Juan Fernandez, where they arrived eight months after leaving Achamack. Their first act was to send a canoe ashore to obtain news of the Mosquito Indian who had been left on the island three years before by Captain Watling. This Indian, who proved to be alive, is a figure in the history of romantic adventure scarce less conspicuous in his way than Alexander Selkirk or Peter Serrano. He was in the woods hunting for goats when Captain Watling and his men, alarmed by the apparition of three Spanish ships, slipped their cable and sailed away, and all that he had with him at the time consisted of a gun and a knife, a small horn of powder, and a handful of shot. Afterwards, by notching his knife to the condition of a saw, he contrived to cut the barrel of his gun into pieces, out of which he manufactured harpoons, lances, hooks, and a long knife. He was thus enabled to provide himself with food, such as flesh of goats, fish, etc. He built himself a hut a short distance from the sea, and lined it with goat-skins. His apparel consisted of a skin wrapped about his waist. There was another Mosquito Indian amongst the buccaneers, a man named Robin, who was the first to leap ashore to greet his brother black. Dampier tells us

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that first Robin threw himself flat on his face at the feet of the other, who, helping him up and embracing him, fell flat on the ground at Robin's feet, and was by him taken up also. "We stood," he says, "with pleasure to behold the surprise and tenderness and solemnity of this Interview, which was exceedingly affectionate on both Sides; and when their ceremonies of civility were over, we also, who stood gazing at them, drew near, each of us embracing him we had found here, who was overjoyed to see so many of his old friends come hither, as he thought, purposely to fetch him."

They sailed from Juan Fernandez on April 8th, still in company with Eaton's ship. During the month of May they captured several vessels, in one of which, besides a quantity of marmalade, they found a stately and handsome mule designed as a gift for the President of Panama, and an immense wooden image of the Virgin Mary. They were, however, unfortunate enough to miss what would have better pleased them than mules and images; for when this ship started from Lima she had eight hundred thousand dollars on board, but on her arrival at Guanchaco news of a privateersman then hovering off the port of Valdivia came to the ears of the merchants, who thereupon instantly removed every stiver out of the vessel.

The recital, even in an abbreviated form, of the adventures of these buccaneers upon the Western American seaboard would make a book of nearly half the thickness of Dampier's first volume. As a mere journal of exploits perhaps the narrative grows after a while a little tedious. One sea-fight is like another; the assaults by land lead to nothing; the prizes captured at sea are insignificant.

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Yet Dampier's page continues to charm us by the vivacity of his descriptions of coasts, of storms, of the corposant, of the turtle, and by a hundred unlaboured and unconscious felicities of phrase.

When off Cape Blanco Captain Cooke died. He was ill when at Juan Fernandez, and continued so till within two or three leagues of the Cape, when he suddenly expired, though Dampier tells us he seemed that morning to be as likely to live as he had been some weeks before; "But it is usual for sick Men coming from the Sea, where they have nothing but the Sea-Air, to die off as soon as ever they come within view of the Land."

The command devolved upon Edward Davis, the quartermaster of the ship. Cooke's body was taken ashore, and whilst some of the crew were burying it three Indians approached, believing the men to be Spaniards, and were made prisoners, though one of them shortly after escaped. The others told the buccaneers of a farm where there was plenty of cattle to be had; and the attempt to steal the bullocks is marked by one of those incidents which convey a fuller idea of the resolved and desperate character of the freebooters, their perils, expedients, and astonishing escapes, than could be communicated by volumes of descriptions of their battles by sea and attacks by land. Twelve men slept ashore, intending when the morning came to drive the bulls and cows which were feeding in the savannas down to the beach; but when the afternoon of the next day arrived they were still ashore, and their shipmates aboard the vessel growing uneasy, ten men were sent in a boat to see what had become of them. On entering the bay they observed the twelve fellows on a small rock half a

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mile from the shore standing in water to above their waists. It seems that, having slept through the night, they had risen betimes to catch the cattle, when they were suddenly surprised by forty or fifty armed Spaniards. The privateersmen drew together in a body, and retreated without disorder or confusion to the beach, but on arriving there they found their boat, which they had dragged out of the water, in flames. The Spaniards now made sure of them, and being numerous, ventured upon several sneers and scoffs before attacking them, asking them, for instance, if they would be so good as to do them the honour to walk to their plantation and steal their cattle and take whatever else they had a mind to, and so forth; to all which menacing and savagely deriding flouts the buccaneers answered never a word. The tide was at half-ebb; a privateersman catching sight of a rock a good distance from the shore, just then showing its head above water, whispered to the others that it would be as good as a castle to them if they could get there. Meanwhile the Spaniards were beginning to whistle a shot amongst them now and then. One of the tallest of the buccaneers waded into the water to try if the distance to the rock could be forded. The depth proved nowhere great; so the twelve marched over to the little distant stronghold, and there remained till their shipmates came for them. They stood about seven hours in all, and must have perished had the boat not then arrived, for the water was flowing, and the tide thereabouts rose to eight feet. The enemy watched them from the shore, but always from behind the bushes, where they had first planted themselves. "The *Spaniards*," says Dampier contemptuously, "in these parts are very expert in heaving or

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darting the Lance; with which upon occasion they will do great Feats, especially in Ambuscades: And by their good Will they care not for fighting otherwise, but content themselves with standing a loof, threatning and calling Names, at which they are as expert as the other; so that if their Tongues be quiet we always take it for granted they have laid some Ambush."

Not very long after this Captain Davis and Captain Eaton separated, bringing the date to the second day of September 1684, and on the 24th Dampier's ship arrived at La Plata and anchored. Whilst lying at this island the privateers were joined by Captain Swan in a vessel named the *Cygnet*. This ship had been freighted by certain London merchants for honourable traffic with the Spaniards in the South Seas, but when she was at Nicoya there arrived a troop of privateersmen from overland, and Swan's men, bringing the pirates aboard, forced their captain to go a-buccaneering. That Swan was as reluctant to oblige them as he afterwards represented himself to have been to Dampier, is possible; it is certain, however, that on meeting with Davis he threw most of the goods he had been freighted to trade with overboard, that his ship, by being "clear," as it is called, might be the fitter to fight and chase. He seems to have been a man of some foresight. Anticipating a time when there might happen such a scarcity of provisions as to force them out of those seas, he taught his men not only to eat, but actually to relish the oily, salt, and rancid flesh of penguins and boobys. "He would commend it," says Dampier, "for extraordinary good food, comparing the seal to a roasting pig, the boobys to hens, and the penguins to ducks."

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The only land-attack of consequence was the attempt on Guayaquil by Swan and Davis. It was badly concerted and half-heartedly undertaken. They landed at about two miles from the town, and being unable to push their way through the tangled growths by night, sat down to wait for daylight. An Indian, who offered to pilot them, was attached to one of Davis's men by a string. The privateersman losing heart, secretly cut the string, and, when the guide had gone some distance, bawled out that the Indian was off and that somebody had cut the cord! What there was in this to terrify the others is not easily seen, but it is true, nevertheless, that their consternation was so great, not a man would venture a step farther. It was not long before they returned to their ship, and so ended their attempt on Guayaquil. The only material issue of this cheap adventure was their capture of three vessels, on board of which were no less than one thousand negroes,—"all lusty young men and women," says Dampier, who laments that they did not convey the whole of them to the Isthmus of Panama, and employ them in digging for gold in the mines at Santa Maria. His idea might seem full of promise to him, but it takes another complexion when examined by the light of the experience of the twelve hundred men who embarked at Leith for Darien on July 26th, 1698.

On December 23rd, 1684, they sailed for the Bay of Panama, and nine days later, whilst proceeding from Tomaco towards Gallo, one of their canoes captured a pacquet-boat sailing from Panama to Lima. The Spaniards buoyed the bag of letters and threw it overboard, but it was picked up by the buccaneers, who

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gathered from the despatches that the President of Panama had sent the mail-boat they had seized to hasten the sailing of the Plate Fleet from Lima. Dampier says that the privateersmen "were very joyful of this news," which is intelligible enough when we consider that the King of Spain's treasure alone on board this fleet was commonly valued at twenty-four millions of dollars, whilst the worth of the galleons was still further increased by their carrying a vast amount in what was termed merchants' money, besides rich commodities of all sorts. It was at once settled that the buccaneers should intercept this fleet. They were in number now two vessels and three barks, and on February 14th, 1685, having finished the business of careening, cleaning, and watering their craft, they stood away for the Bay of Panama. Whilst they lay off the Island of Tabago they were nearly destroyed by a singular stratagem. A man feigning to be a merchant came to them from Panama. He professed to act as by stealth, in which the buccaneers found no cause for suspicion, for it was common enough for Spanish merchants to traffic privately with them, notwithstanding the prohibition of the governors. It was arranged that this merchant should fill his vessel with goods, and bring her by night to the English, who were to shift their berth to receive her. He came, but with a fire-ship instead of a cargo-boat, and approaching the English close, hailed them with the watchword that had been settled upon. The privateers growing suspicious, ordered the vessel to bring to, and on her not doing so, fired into her. Her crew instantly jumped into their boats, after firing the ship, which blew up and burnt close

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alongside of the privateersmen, "so that," says Dampier, "we were forced to cut our cables in all haste, and scamper away as well as we could." Swan was also imperilled by another Spanish device. His ship lay about a mile distant, with a canoe made fast to his anchor-buoy. Just as the fire-ship blew up, Swan noticed something floating on the water close aboard of him. He peered, and discerned a man upon it softly paddling the contrivance towards his vessel. Probably the fellow suspected he was discovered, for he suddenly dived and disappeared.

Nothing particular happened till the 24th, when, being again at anchor off the Island of Tobago, about eighteen miles south of the city of Panama, they observed a number of canoes filled with men. They kept still, watching them the while; then lifting their anchors, approached and hailed them. They proved to be English and French privateers who had marched across the Isthmus; two hundred French and eighty Englishmen distributed amongst twenty-eight canoes under the command of Captain Grognet and Captain Lequie. These men stated that there still remained on the Isthmus at least one hundred and eighty Englishmen, commanded by Captain Townley, who when last heard of were busily employed in the construction of canoes to convey them to the South Sea. All the English of the party were immediately taken into the service of Captain Davis and Captain Swan, whilst one of the prizes was given to the Frenchmen. They were now a strong company of men. First of all there was Captain Davis in his ship of thirty-six guns, with a crew of one hundred and fifty-six determined rogues, chiefly English; Captain Swan, sixteen guns

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and one hundred and forty men, all English; Captain Townley, one hundred and ten men; Captain Grognet, three hundred and eight men, all French; Captain Harris, one hundred men, chiefly English; Captain Branly, thirty-six men; besides three barks serving as tenders, and a small bark for a fire-ship—in all, nine hundred and sixty men. Formidable as this force looks, however, on paper, there were but two of the vessels—namely, Swan's and Davis's—which mounted guns. The rest had only small arms. On the 28th the Spanish fleet hove in sight: fourteen sail, besides periaguas rowing twelve and fourteen oars apiece. The admiral's ship carried forty-eight guns and four hundred and fifty men; the vice-admiral, forty guns and four hundred and fifty men; the others were only a little less powerfully armed and manned. Here we have the materials of a terrible fight, and we look with confidence to the buccaneers for a glorious victory. But never was failure completer. Nothing was done till the afternoon had darkened into evening, and then a few shots were exchanged. When the night came down the Spaniards anchored, and the buccaneers observed a light flaming in the admiral's top. It remained stationary for half an hour and was then extinguished. Soon afterwards it was again exposed, and the buccaneers, believing it to be still aboard the admiral, flattered themselves with having the weather-gage. But when the morning broke they found, to their disgust, that this light had been a stratagem, and that they were to leeward. The Spaniards sighting them, immediately bore down under a press of sail, and the buccaneers ran for it. "Thus," says Dampier, "ended this day's work, and with it all that we had been

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projecting for five or six months; when instead of making ourselves masters of the Spanish fleet and treasure, we were glad to escape them; and owed that too in a great measure to their want of courage to pursue their advantage." He adds that the failure was largely owing to the cowardice of Captain Grognet and his men, whose only part in the manœuvring was running away.[1]

The buccaneers were now growing disheartened by their ill-luck. On August 25th, 1685, Davis and Swan separated, and Dampier, who had heretofore served under Davis, joined Swan, not, as he assures us, from any dislike of his old captain, but because he understood that it was Swan's intention before long to go to the East Indies, "which," he exclaims, "was a way very agreeable to my inclination." It was not, however, until March 1st, 1686, that they took leave of the Mexican coast and started on that voyage which led to Dampier's circumnavigation of the globe. They went in two ships, one commanded by Swan, and the other by a man named Teat. In number they were one hundred and fifty men —one hundred aboard Swan, and fifty, exclusive of some slaves, in the other vessel. Their start was for Guam, one of the Ladrone Islands, and the vagueness and uncertainty of the navigation of those days finds a sin-

[1] Ravenau de Lussan, who was with Grognet in this action, gives us a French version of the business: "About two the Spaniards sent out a ship of eight and twenty guns to hinder Captain Grognet from joining us, as understanding by some Spaniards who had been our prisoners that he was the strongest in small arms of any in our fleet, and that they were so much the more fearful of him, when they came to know his crew consisted of Frenchmen!" This man calls Davis "David," and says he was a Fleming, and he writes Swan's name "Sammes." His story is printed in *The Bucaniers of America* already referred to.

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gular illustration in Dampier's surmise as to the actual distance between Cape Corrientes and their destination. He tells us that the Spaniards reckoned the distance about two thousand three hundred and fifty leagues, whereas the English calculations reduced it to less than two thousand leagues. The truth being unknown to the crews, they entered upon the voyage with something of that despondency and apprehension which the mariners of Columbus felt after they had lost sight of land. The hope of plunder heartened them somewhat, for Swan talked to them of the Acapulco ship and of a profitable cruise off the Philippines; but in sober truth with but little conscience in his assurances and exhortations, for the man had long since grown sick of privateering, and his main object in sailing for the East Indies was the desire to find an opportunity to escape from a calling which he was honest enough to consider dishonourable.

They sighted Guam on May 20th, 1686, and it was fortunate both for Swan and Dampier that the land hove in sight when it did, for they had scarcely enough provisions to last them another three days; and Dampier declares, "I was afterwards informed the Men had contrived first to kill Captain Swan and eat him when the Victuals was gone, and after him all of us who were accessary in promoting the undertaking of this Voyage. This made Captain Swan say to me after our arrival at Guam, *Ah!* Dampier, *you would have made them but a poor Meal*, for I was as Lean as the Captain was lusty and fleshy." Dampier's chapters are now wholly made up of description. He is copious in his accounts of the natives, of the cocoa-nut, the lime-tree, and the bread-fruit; and then carrying us on to Mindanao, he fills many

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pages with lively remarks on the trade of the Dutch, the climate, winds, tornadoes, and rains. It is manifest throughout that he is very unsettled, without any scheme of life, without a ghost of an idea as regards his future. He waits patiently but with a vigilant eye upon fortune, and is ready to address himself to any adventure, no matter how slender of promise. Just as he would have carried the thousand negroes to Darien to dig gold for himself and his associates, so whilst at the Philippines would he have been glad to settle down among the Mindanayans. There were sawyers, he tells us, carpenters, brickmakers, shoemakers, tailors, and the like, amongst the men, who were also well provided with all sorts of tools. They had a good ship, too, and he conceives that had they established themselves in that island they might have ended as a very flourishing and wealthy community. But his schemes served no other purpose than to enable him to digress in his narrative when he came to relate his adventures.

The ship lay so long at Mindanao that the men grew weary and mutinous; some of them ran away into the country, others purchased a canoe designing to proceed to Borneo. Those of the ship's company who had money lived ashore, but there were many (Dampier amongst them) who were without a halfpenny, and who were therefore obliged to remain on board and subsist on the wretched stores of the vessel. These fellows became very troublesome; they stole iron out of the ship and exchanged it for spirits and honey, of which they made punch, so that there was a great deal of drunkenness and ill-blood amongst them. Finding that Swan paid no heed to their request that he would start on further

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adventures, and discovering certain entries in the captain's journal which greatly incensed them, they resolved to run away with the ship; a threat there is every reason to suppose Swan secretly wished them to carry out. He knew that the crew were bent on piracy, and that their next step must prove nothing but another buccaneering cruise. He had previously told Dampier that he was forced into this business by his people, and that he only sought or awaited an opportunity to escape from it, adding bitterly, "That there was no Prince on Earth able to wipe off the stain of such Actions." He was apprised of his men's design, but does not appear to have lifted a finger to hinder them. On January 14th, 1687, early in the morning, Dampier being on board, the crew weighed anchor and fired a gun, being yet willing to receive Captain Swan and others of their shipmates who were on shore. No answer was returned, whereupon without further ado they filled their topsails and started, leaving the commander and thirty-six men behind them.

The subsequent fate of Swan and his men is worth a brief reference. They remained for some considerable time on the island, and then some of them managed to obtain a passage to Batavia. Captain Swan and his surgeon, whilst rowing to a Dutch ship that was to convey them to Europe, were overset in their canoe by some natives, who stabbed them whilst they were swimming for their lives. Others of the men who remained at Mindanao were poisoned.

By this time Dampier was as heartily weary as ever Swan had been of the voyage, if not of privateering, and waited for a chance to give his comrades the slip. Meanwhile the vessel, after cruising off Manila, where

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they took a couple of Spanish craft, proceeded from one island to another, from one port to another, until, the monsoon being close at hand, they decided to skirt the Philippine Islands, and, heading southwards towards what was then known as the Spice Islands, enter the Indian Ocean by way of Timor. The object of all this roundabout navigation is not very plain. Dampier asserts that the crew were in great fear of meeting with English or Dutch ships; still it is difficult to understand their motive in straying so wide afield from the common maritime highways of that period. They were now on the Australian parallels, in the shadow of a world lying dark upon the face of the ocean. As privateersmen they had little to hope or expect from pushing into regions full of mystery and peril. Dampier says that being clear of the islands they stood off south, intending to touch at New Holland "to see what that country would afford us." One would wish for his dignity as a navigator that he had avowed, on his own part at least, a higher motive for the exploration. It does not seem to enter his head, at this point of his career at all events, that the discovery of the true character and area of the Terra Australis Incognita might bring to the marine explorer of its rocky coasts honours scarcely less glorious, renown certainly not less enduring, than were won by the mightiest of the old navigators. It is proper to remember, however, that Dampier was but a common sailor in this ship that had been run away with, and that his expectations, and perhaps his ambition, scarcely rose above those of a privateersman; though how far he resembled his shipmates in other directions we may gather from his narrative, which he builds

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wholly upon the journal he faithfully kept throughout; never remitting his strict practice of laborious observation whether in storm or in shine, whether amidst the bustle and activity of a chase, or the languor and listlessness of a long spell of tropical calm.

"New Holland," he says, "is a very large tract of land. It is not yet determined whether it is an island or a main continent; but I am certain that it joyns neither to Africa, Asia, or America." Why he is certain he does not tell us, but he is too sagacious to err, though whilst he thus thinks, all that he sees of the vast territory is "low land with sandy banks against the sea." He devotes several pages to descriptions of the natives, telling us that they have no houses, that they go armed with a piece of wood shaped like a cutlass, that their speech is guttural, that in consequence of the flies which tease and sting their faces, they keep their eyelids half closed; and so forth. One extract from several pages of most admirable, quaint description will, I trust, be permitted.

"After we had been here a little while, the Men began to be familiar, and we cloathed some of them, designing to have had some service from them for it: for we found some Wells of Water here, and intended to carry 2 or 3 barrels of it aboard. But it being somewhat troublesome to carry to the Canaos, we thought to have made these men to have carry'd it for us, and therefore we gave them some Cloathes; to one an old pair of Breeches, to another a ragged Shirt, to a third a Jacket that was scarce worth owning; which yet would have been very acceptable at some places where we had been, and so we thought they might have been with these

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People. We put them on, thinking that this finery would have brought them to work heartily for us; and our Water being filled in small long Barrels, about 6 gallons in each, which were made purposely to carry Water in, we brought these our new Servants to the Wells, and put a Barrel on each of their Shoulders for them to carry to the Canao. But all the signs we could make were to no purpose, for they stood like Statues, without motion, but grinn'd like so many monkeys, staring one upon another: For these poor Creatures seem'd not accustomed to carry Burdens: and I believe that one of our Ship Boys of 10 Years old, would carry as much as one of them. So we were forced to carry our Water ourselves; and they very fairly put the Cloaths off again, and laid them down, as if the Cloaths were only to work in. I did not perceive that they had any liking to them at first; neither did they seem to admire anything that we had."

To the part of New Holland these privateers touched at they gave no name. Dampier speaks of the latitude of it being 16° 50′, but his reckonings are not to be trusted. To judge by the tracings of the map of this portion of the world in his first volume, the coast which they first sighted was that of North Australia, and they probably anchored off either Bathurst or Melville Island. Be this as it may, they did not linger long. Dampier endeavoured to persuade the men to sail to some English factory, but in return for his advice they threatened to leave him ashore on the sands of New Holland, "which," says he, "made me desist." They soon saw as much of Terra Incognita as satisfied them, and on March 12th, 1688, they weighed with the wind at north north-west

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and steered their ship northwards. They arrived at Nicobar on May 5th, and here Dampier resolved to leave the vessel. Obtaining leave to go ashore, he was landed on the sandy beach of a small bay where stood two untenanted houses; but he had not enjoyed an hour of liberty when some armed men came from the ship to fetch him aboard again. Resistance was as idle as entreaties, and he was forced to return; but on his arrival he found the vessel in an uproar. Others, taking courage by his example, had also determined to leave the ship. Amongst them was the surgeon. This man the captain flatly refused to part with, and the hubbub was great. All this confusion and quarrelling seems to have helped Dampier, for, after a deal of squabbling, we find him and two others obtaining permission to quit the ship. They were put ashore with their effects, and entering one of the unoccupied houses, hung up their hammocks to prepare for the night. Presently more men arrived, and they were now numerous enough to protect themselves against the natives. It was a fine clear, moonlight night, and the little company of buccaneers walked down to the beach to wait until the ship should weigh and be gone, fearing their liberty whilst she stayed. At twelve o'clock they heard her getting her anchor and making sail, and presently she was gliding slowly and silently seawards, glistening white against the ocean darkness to the rays of the high moon.

Next day Dampier and his associates purchased a canoe, and passed over to the south end of the island, where they victualled their little boat with fruit loaves, cocoa-nuts, and fresh water, so that when the monsoon came on to blow they might be in readiness to sail for

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Acheen. It is consistent that a man who had traversed on foot the dangerous and poisonous Isthmus of Panama should parallel that accomplishment by a remarkable boat-voyage. The craft was a canoe of the size of a London wherry, deeper but not so broad, sharp after the whaling pattern at both ends, and so thin and light that when empty four men could lift her. She carried a mat-sail, and outriggers to prevent her from capsizing. In this little ark Dampier and his shipmates embarked —eight men, four of whom were Malays—and started for Acheen on May 15th, 1688. The breezes were light, the atmosphere sultry. Sometimes they rowed, sometimes left the sail to do its work, but at the end of two days, to their great mortification, they found the Island of Nicobar still in sight a little over twenty miles distant. On the 18th they remarked a great circle round the sun, an appearance that caused Dampier to suppose that bad weather was at hand. His foreboding was true; wind and sea rose, and but for the outriggers the canoe must have been swamped. Still the gale freshened, and there was nothing for it but to scud. There occurs here a characteristic passage. It reads like an extract from *Robinson Crusoe*, and nothing in all Dampier so conclusively proves the source whence Defoe drew the colours which he employed in the composition of his chief and most engaging work.

"The Evening of this 18th day was very dismal. The Sky looked very black, being covered with dark Clouds, the Wind blew very hard, and the Seas ran very high. The Sea was already roaring in a white foam about us; a dark night coming on and no Land in sight to shelter us, and our little Ark in danger to

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be swallowed by every Wave; and what was worse for us all, none of us thought ourselves prepared for another World. The Reader may better guess, than I can express, the Confusion that we were all in. I have been in many eminent Dangers before now, some of which I have already related, but the worst of them all was but a Play-Game in comparison with this. I must confess that I was in great Conflicts of Mind at this time. Other Dangers came not upon me with such a leisurely and dreadful Solemnity: A Sudden Skirmish or Engagement, or so, was nothing when one's Blood was up, and push'd forward with eager expectations. But here I had a lingering view of approaching Death, and little or no hopes of escaping it; and I must confess that my Courage which I had hitherto kept up, failed me here; and I made very sad Reflections on my former life; and looked back with Horrour and Detestation on actions which before I disliked, but now I trembled at the remembrance of. I had long before this repented me of that roving course of my life, of which kind, I believe, few Men have met with the like. For all these I returned Thanks in a peculiar manner, and this once more desir'd God's assistance, and Composed my Mind as well as I could, in the hopes of it, and as the Event shew'd, I was not disappointed of my hopes."

But Dampier was a thoroughbred seamen. The canoe was superbly handled, and after a terrible time of violent storms the low land of Sumatra was descried on the morning of the 20th. Fever-stricken by the excessive hardships and fatigues they had endured, insomuch that they were too weak to stand up in their canoe, our adventurers drifted into a river, and were

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supported by some natives to an adjacent village. Here Dampier stayed for ten or twelve days in the hope of recovering his health, but finding that he did not improve, he made his way to Acheen, where he was so dosed by a Malay doctor that he came very near to expiring. On regaining his health, he entered with Captain Weldon of the ship *Curtana* for a voyage to Tonquin. The first part of his second volume is devoted to a description of his travels in Tonquin, Acheen, Malacca, and other places.[1] There is but little narrative, nevertheless the work is singularly interesting, and as literally accurate as a Chinese painting.

Dampier was very willing to accept Captain Weldon's offer of this voyage, as the vessel carried a surgeon whose advice he was in great need of. Moreover Weldon promised to purchase a sloop at Tonquin and make him master of her for a trading voyage to Cochin China. Nothing noteworthy marked their passage. On their arrival at the Bay of Tonquin they navigated the ship about twenty miles up the river and anchored. The chief markets and trade of the country were then at Cachao, a city eighty miles distant from the highest point at which the river is navigable by vessels of burthen. Dampier, in company with the captains of

[1] The title runs thus:—"*Voyages and Descriptions.* Vol. ii. In Three Parts, viz. 1. A Supplement of the Voyage round the World, Describing the Countreys of Tonquin, Achin, Malacca, etc.: their Product, Inhabitants, Manners, Trade, Policy, etc. 2. Two Voyages to Campeachy; with a Description of the Coasts, Product, Inhabitants, Log-wood-Cutting Trade, etc., of Jucatan, Campeachy, New Spain, etc. 3. A Discourse of Trade-Winds, Breezes, Storms, Seasons of the Year, Tides and Currents of the Torrid Zone throughout the World; with an Account of Natal in Africk: its Product, Negro's, etc. 1699."

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other ships, proceeded in large boats towards Cachao. It was scarcely more than a jaunt for our hero, whose main business in going the journey was to talk over the proposed voyage to Cochin China with the chief of the English factory. Dampier remained for a week with the Englishmen at the factory, and then returned to his own ship, "where," says he, "I lay on board for a great while, and sickly for the most part; yet not so but that I took a boat and went ashoar one where or other almost every day." The result of this intrepid observation is a full and interesting account of Tonquin, the habits and customs of the people, their attire, sports, punishments, religion, and literature. His health hindered him from several undertakings which he might have pursued with advantage. For example, rice being dear at Cachao, Weldon hired a vessel to procure that commodity at adjacent places to supply the markets. It was a speculation by which Dampier might have got money, but he was too ill to bear a part in it. He lay five or six weeks in a miserable condition, then flattered himself that he was sufficiently recovered to go on a walking tour through the country. To this end he hired a native guide, who charged him a dollar for his services, "which," he says, "tho' but a small matter, was a great deal out of my Pocket, who had not above 2 Dollars in all, which I had gotten on board by teaching some of our young Seamen Plain Sailing." He started about the end of November 1688, and the proverbial heedlessness of the seaman is not less suggested by his poverty than by his resolution to attempt such a trip as this. He has but a dollar in his pocket with which not only to bear his own but his guide's charges, and yet he is fully aware that

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his weakness is bound to increase the cost of his travels by obliging him to proceed by short stages. He says he was weary of lying still and impatient to see something that might further gratify his curiosity. They took the east side of the river, and trudged along mutely enough, as we may suppose, since the guide could not speak a word of English, whilst Dampier did not understand a syllable of Tonquinese. At the villages they arrived at they were sufficiently fortunate to procure rooms to sleep in and a couch of split bamboos to lie on. The people treated Dampier very civilly; they cooked his repasts of rice for him, and lent him whatever they had that was serviceable to him. His practice was to ramble about all day, and return to his lodging when it was too dark to see anything more. His luggage was small—limited to what he terms a "sea-gown," which his guide carried, and which served him as a blanket at night, whilst his pillow was often a log of wood. "But," he says, "I slept very well, though the weakness of my body did now require better accommodation."

On the afternoon of the third day of his travels he arrived in view of a small wooden tower such as the Tonquinese erect as funeral pyres to persons of distinction. He had never seen such a thing before, and as his guide could not talk to him, he continued ignorant of its meaning. There was a crowd of men and boys near it, and he also noticed a number of stalls covered with meat and fruit. He very naturally concluded that it was a market-place, and entered the crowd partly with the intention of inspecting the tower, and partly with the idea of purchasing a dish of meat for his supper. After satisfying his curiosity he approached the stalls

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and laid hold of a joint of meat, motioning to a person whom he supposed was the salesman to cut off a piece that should weigh two or three pounds. In an instant the crowd fell upon him. They struck out at him right and left, tore his clothes and ran away with his hat. The guide, shrieking unintelligible protests and apologies, dragged Dampier away, but they were followed for some distance by a number of surly-looking fellows whose cries and gesticulations were full of menace. It was not until long afterwards that Dampier gathered the meaning of all this; when he was informed that what he had taken to be a market was a funeral feast, and that the tower was a tomb which was to be consumed along with the body in it after the feast was over. "This," says he, "was the only Funeral Feast that ever I was at amongst them, and they gave me cause to remember it: but this was the worst usage I received from any of them all the time that I was in the Country."

Two days later he arrived at a town called Hean, where he was received in a very friendly manner by a priest attached to the French bishop; this place, it seems, being the headquarters of the missionaries. After some conversation the priest inquired if any of the English ships would sell him some gunpowder. Dampier answered that he believed none of them had powder to spare. The father then inquired if he knew how gunpowder was made. On Dampier answering in the affirmative he begged him to try his hand. The priest had all the ingredients with the necessary machinery for mixing them, so after drinking a few glasses of wine Dampier went to work. "The priest," he says, "brought me Sulphur and Salt-Peter, and I weighed a portion of

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each of these, and of Coals I gathered up in the Hearth and beat to powder. While his man mixed these in a little Engine, I made a small Sieve of Parchment, which I pricked full of holes with a small Iron made hot, and this was to corn it. When it was dry we proved it, and it answered our expectation." There is something not a little odd and impressive in this picture of the buccaneer manufacturing gunpowder at the request of a holy father, who watches him with the utmost anxiety as if he were sensible that the propagation of his faith amongst the mustard-coloured masses of Tonquin must depend a good deal upon the success of Dampier's experiment. It was fish-day at the palace, but the priest was so well pleased with Dampier and his gunpowder and his conversation that he ordered a fowl to be broiled for his dinner, and when the night came procured a lodging for him in a house kept by a Tonquinese Christian hard by.

Next morning Dampier dismissed his guide and started for Cachao by water. He describes the boat as of the size of a Gravesend wherry, with a kind of awning to shelter the passengers when it rained. The sailors rowed all night, turn and turn about. At midnight everybody went ashore to sup at some houses by the river-side; the owners of which waited for them with lighted candles, arrack, and tea, dishes of meat and other provisions ready cooked. Here they stayed an hour, then entered the boat afresh and pushed onwards. The passengers were a merry lot. They laughed incessantly and sang heartily, though Dampier says their singing resembled the noise of people crying. Ignorant of the language, he sat mute amongst these jolly travellers.

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Next morning he was put ashore a few miles short of Cachao. There was a good path, and stepping out briskly he entered the city by noon. He immediately repaired to the house of an English merchant with whom Captain Weldon lodged, and stayed with him a few days, but he was so enfeebled by a wasting disorder which had fastened upon him that he was scarcely able to crawl about. His illness was exasperated by disappointment, for he now discovered that he had made his walking journey only to learn that Weldon had abandoned his scheme to purchase a sloop to trade to Cochin China. The moment he felt strong enough to travel he returned to his ship, and Captain Weldon shortly afterwards joining the vessel, they weighed anchor and sailed from Tonquin. It was now February, 1689. Nothing of moment happened during the passage to the Straits of Malacca. The ship arrived at Acheen about the beginning of March, where Dampier took leave of Weldon and went ashore. He gives in this volume of his travels a long and interesting account of Acheen, and in describing the soil of the country prints the following brief passage of recollection. "The Champion Land, such as I have seen, is some black, some grey, some reddish, and all of a deep mold. But to be very particular in these things, especially in my Travels, is more than I can pretend to, tho' it may be I took as much notice of the difference of Soil as I met with it as most Travellers have done, having been bred in my youth in *Somersetshire*, at a place called *East Coker*, near *Yeovil* or *Evil:* in which Parish there is a great variety of Soil as I have ordinarily met with anywhere, *viz.* black, red, yellow, sandy, stony, clay, morass, or swampy,

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etc. I had the more reason to take notice of this, because this Village in a great measure is Let out in small Leases for Lives of 20, 30, 40 or 50 Pound *per Ann.*, under Coll. *Helliar*, the Lord of the Mannor: and most, if not all these Tenants, had their own Land scattered in small pieces up and down several sorts of Land in the Parish; so that every one had piece of every sort of Land, his Black ground, his Sandy, Clay, and some of 20, 30, or 40 Shillings an Acre. My Mother, being possest of one of these Leases, and having all these sorts of Land, I came acquainted with them all, and knew what each sort would produce (*viz.*) Wheat, Barley, Maslin, Rice, Beans, Peas, Oats, Fetches, Flax, or Hemp: in all which I had a more than useful knowledge for one so young, taking a particular delight in observing it." Vague as is this reference to his shore-going life, it is the only passage of the kind that I have met in his books, and for this reason therefore I reproduce it at length.

Whilst he was at Acheen some of the people rebelled against the choice that had been made of a queen. Dampier, with others, hastened to take shelter in the ships in the road, fearing that if the rebels obtained the upper hand they would imprison him. He had indeed good cause to dread the effects of a prison upon his constitution, shaken and almost shattered as it was by long illness. There were two vessels at anchor, one of them fresh from England and short of provisions. He in consequence boarded the other, whose stores were tolerably plentiful, but she was so crowded with cargo that he could not find space to swing his hammock in; and as repose was absolutely essential to him, he carried

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his bed into the boat that had brought him off and lay in her for three or four days, fed by the people of the ship. He could obtain no rest. There happened a total eclipse of the moon, at which he gazed from the bottom of his boat, but he says: "I was so little curious that I remembred not so much as what Day of the Month it was, and I kept no journal of this Voyage as I did of my other; but only kept an account of several particular Remarks and Observations as they occurred to me." When the disturbance ashore was quieted he returned to his lodging, and learning that the natives regarded the water of their river as charged with medicinal virtues, he determined to bathe in it, and after a few baths was so much benefited that he was able to get about again. In May, 1689, he took charge of a sloop that had been purchased by one Captain Tyler; but when the craft was loaded, the owner changed his mind and gave the command to a man named Minchin, who offered Dampier the post of mate. "I was forced to submit," he says bitterly, "and accepted a Mate's employ under Captain Minchin." They sailed in the middle of September for Malacca, at which place some of the people left Minchin to join another vessel that had been in company, so that Dampier and the captain were the only two white sailors on board. Shortly after starting they carried away their foreyard and brought up off a small island owned by the Dutch. Dampier called upon the governor to request his permission to cut down a tree. Our hero, as an old Campeché man, was not likely to be at a loss; and leaving the tree ready to be carried to the ship, he returned to the fort, dined with the governor, and then went aboard. Shortly afterwards his

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captain, together with a passenger and his wife, came ashore. The fare of the fort was exceedingly meagre, and the governor, to entertain his guests, sent a boat to catch a dish of fish. The fish, on being cooked, was served in dishes of solid silver, and eaten from plates of the same metal; whilst in the centre of the table was placed a great silver bowl full of punch. It was to prove but little better than a Barmecide's feast. The governor, his guests, and several officers attached to the fort seated themselves, but as they were about to begin a soldier outside roared, "The Malays!" The governor, starting from his chair, leapt out of one of the windows, the officers followed, and all was consternation and uproar. "Every one of them," says Dampier, "took the nearest way, some out of the Windows, others out of the Doors, leaving the three Guests by themselves, who soon followed with all the haste they could make, without knowing the meaning of this sudden consternation of the Governor and his people." All being in the fort, the door was bolted, and several volleys fired to let the Malays know that the Dutch were in readiness for them. The alarm was real enough. A large Malay canoe, filled with men armed to the teeth, had been noticed skulking under the island close to the shore. The captain and the passengers hastened on board, the vessel's guns were loaded and primed for service, and a bright look-out kept all night. Dampier, however, was not very much frightened. It rained heavily, and he knew from experience that the Malays seldom or never made any attack in wet weather. Next morning nothing was to be seen of the enemy, and having rigged up the foreyard, Dampier and his companions set sail for

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Acheen. Here he was seized with a fever, which confined him to his bed for a fortnight. On regaining his health he returned to the vessel with orders to take charge of her, and on New Year's Day, 1690, sailed for Fort St. George with a cargo of pepper and other produce. His description of Madras as it then showed, now two hundred years ago, is interesting. "I was much pleased," he says, "with the beautiful prospect this Place makes off at Sea. For it stands in a plain Sandy spot of Ground, close by the shore, the Sea sometimes washing its Walls; which are of Stone and high, with Half-Moons and Flankers and a great many Guns mounted on the Battlements: so that what with the Walls and fine buildings within the Fort, the large town of *Maderas* without it, the Pyramids of the English Tombs, Houses, and Gardens adjacent, and the variety of fine Trees scatter'd up and down, it makes as agreeable a Landskip as I have anywhere seen." He tells us that he stayed at this place for some months, where he met with a Mr. Moody, who had purchased what Dampier calls a painted prince named Jeoly. Then in July he sailed with a Captain Howel for Sumatra.

He arrived at Acheen in April, 1689, and afterwards obtained a berth as gunner at Bencoolen, then an English factory. After some further adventures of no importance, we find him again gunner of the fort at Bencoolen, at a salary of twenty-four dollars a month. But it was not long before he grew dissatisfied with the conduct of the governor, and asked to be released. He was also eager to return to England. First of all he had been a long time absent from his native country, and next, he was in possession of the painted prince whom Mr. Moody

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had purchased at Mindanao for sixty dollars, and he expected on his return to England to make a good deal of money by exhibiting this unhappy black, of whose tatooings he gives a very minute account. It seems strange that such a man as Dampier should have been unable to hit upon a better way of gaining a livelihood than by proposing to turn showman in his own country, with nothing better to exhibit than a poor, miserable black man, whose only wonder lay in having rings and bracelets, crosses, and a variety of unmeaning flourishes pricked into his skin. The governor was, however, by no means willing to let him go, and Dampier at last was obliged to obtain by a stratagem what was denied him as a right. On January 2nd, 1691, a ship named the *Defence*, bound for England, dropped anchor in Bencoolen Road. Dampier made the acquaintance of her master, a man named Heath, who readily complied with his request to receive him on board. Jeoly was first carefully shipped, and then one midnight Dampier crept through a porthole of the fort and ran to the beach, where he found a boat waiting to convey him to the *Defence*. Nothing that is noteworthy happened during the passage home. The ship entered the English Channel in September, 1691, and on the 16th of the same month "we lufft in," says Dampier, "for the Downs, where we anchored."

Thus terminated William Dampier's first voyage round the world. Dating from Virginia, August 22nd, 1683, his circumnavigation had occupied eight years; but his previous seafaring experiences, counting from the period of his starting from England in the *Loyal Merchant* in 1679, enlarged his absence to the long space of twelve

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years. Beyond greatly extending his knowledge, his travels had done nothing for him. He had started in quest of Fortune, and had found her as phantasmal as the St. Elmo's fire at which he had gazed with wonder at the masthead. And all that he brought home in the shape of property was the unhappy Prince Jeoly, whom he sold after his arrival in the Thames, being in want of money—to such a pass had buccaneering and the circumnavigation of the globe brought him.

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CHAPTER IV

1699–1701

THE VOYAGE OF THE "ROEBUCK."[1]

DAMPIER tells us nothing of his private and home-going life after he carries us to sea with him in the *Loyal Merchant*, and so little is known of that side of his career that there is no means of supplying his omissions except by conjecture. It is pretty certain that he was very needy when he returned from his first voyage round the world. The value of his Dorsetshire estate cannot be guessed, but even if he still retained it, his views and endeavours are at this time those of a poor man. In the first volume of his Travels, as we have seen, he treats of New Holland as a privateersman would,—glances, to use his own metaphor, at the fringe of the carpet without desire to examine the texture or the body of it, and quickly shares the disgust of his shipmates, whose dreams are wholly of plunder. But on coming home and reflecting, whilst setting about the writing of his Travels, on the land he had sighted in the distant southern ocean, it is conceivable that ambitious thoughts should begin slowly to fill his mind. The world at large at that time

[1] *A Voyage to New Holland, &c., in the Year 1699*, by Captain William Dampier. 1709.

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barely credited the existence of a continent south of the East Indies. The draughts of Tasman, the relations of De Quiros, Le Maire, and others, were regarded for the most part as travellers' tales. Dampier might justly hope in an age when the colonising instincts of the English were never keener, that money and honour must be the reward of the man who should be the first to open out a country fabulous yet in the judgment of mankind, and, by the light of discovery, resolve what was still visionary and dark into a magnificent reality.

His next step, at all events, was to seek ministerial and official help for a voyage of discovery to New Holland. He lived in the days of Dryden and of the patron, and his dedications exhibit him as possessed in a high degree of the art of literary congeeing. This undesirable but profitable capacity of cringing serviceably supplemented the reputation he had made for himself as a traveller. He found patrons in Charles Montague, afterwards Earl of Halifax, President of the Royal Society, and one of the Lord Commissioners of the Treasury; in Edward, Earl of Oxford, one of the principal Lords of the Admiralty; and in Thomas Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, who filled the office of Lord High Admiral. His representations were successful, probably beyond his own expectations, and in the beginning of the year 1699 he was appointed to the command of His Majesty's ship *Roebuck* of twelve guns, manned by a crew of fifty men and boys, and victualled for a twenty months' cruise. Confidence, such as this trust implies, in the character and qualifications of a man whose rating even as a privateersman was but that of an able seaman, handsomely testifies to the very high opinion in which Dampier was held.

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The nature of the soil, climate, and the general character of Terra Australis, Dampier could only conjecture. The ideas he had formed of this unknown continent were, that it was a vast tract of land situated in the richest climates in the world, having in it especially all the advantage of the torrid zone, so that in coasting it the navigator might be sure of meeting with broad areas productive of the rich fruits, the drugs and spices, and perhaps the minerals discoverable in other parts in, as he concluded, the same parallels of latitude. His scheme was to narrowly survey all islands, shores, capes, bays, creeks, and harbours, fit for shelter as well as defence, to take careful soundings as he went, to note tides, currents, and wind, and the character of the weather, with a special view to the settling of the best districts. He also proposed to closely observe the disposition and commodities of the natives, though he candidly admits that after his experience of their neighbours "he expected no great matters from them." The course he originally designed to take was to the westward by way of the Straits of Magellan, so as to strike the eastern coast of Australia; and there is very little doubt that had he pursued his first intention he would have anticipated nearly every discovery of importance in those waters subsequently made by his celebrated successor James Cook. Unhappily his judgment erred in one essential direction. He was of opinion that the lands lying nearest the equator would best repay the explorer. Nor perhaps could he guess how far he would have to penetrate the high latitudes if he stood south; and having passed the greater portion of his seafaring life in Mexican, Pacific, and Indian seas, his love of the sun, fortified by

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recollection of the cold of the Horn and of the one bitter voyage he took to Newfoundland, might suffice to determine him on pinning his faith as an explorer and on limiting his curiosity as a sailor to the summer regions of the globe. Yet his great knowledge of the equatorial climates should certainly have warned him against a Northern Australian and New Guinea quest. Further, there were the experiences of Tasman to help him, whose relations are as finger-posts in the extracts of Dirk Rembrantz. Had he steered westwards, the sighting of the New Zealand coast to the south, or of the shining islands of the Paumotu and other groups to the north, would have borne in the truth upon his ready and sagacious mind, corrected his fears of cold weather, given him clear views as to the southernmost extension of the Terra Incognita, and perhaps have antedated the civilisation of Australia by half a century. In an evil moment, intimidated by thoughts of the ice of Tierra del Fuego, and worried by the murmurs and half-heartedness of a crew, the majority of whom were quite young seamen, "only two in the ship ever having passed the Line, and those two none of the oldest," he determined to prosecute his voyage to New Holland by way of the Cape of Good Hope.

He sailed from the Downs on January 14th, 1699. His intention was to proceed to Pernambuco, and thence directly to the coast of New Guinea; but scarcely had a month elapsed when the crew began to give trouble, to mutter their dislike of the proposed voyage, and even to talk of obliging him to return to England. At Pernambuco, owing to the distance of the anchorage from the town, the men would have found it easy to slip the

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vessel's cables and run away with her; and not choosing to venture any risk of this kind, Dampier steered for Bahia de Todos los Santos. This was a considerable trading-port in his time, formed of about two thousand houses. He found upwards of thirty large ships lying in the bay, and speaks of a busy traffic in linen and woollen goods, in hats and silk stockings, in biscuit, wheat, flour, and port wine. His closeness of observation is once again exhibited in all that he has to say about this place. Nothing escapes him. He gives you a long catalogue of all the vegetables and fruits of the district, of the birds, beasts of prey, dogs, monkeys, hogs, and the like, and then comes to the sea, from which he produces a list of twenty-three different kinds of fish. He sailed on April 3rd, and made a fair course for the coast of New Holland. The quality of the reckoning of even an expert mariner in those days may be gathered from his telling us that, seeing a large black bird flying near the ship, he suspected that he was much nearer the Cape of Good Hope than he had imagined, since it was well understood that this sort of bird is never to be met with farther than ninety miles from land. By his own account, he was two hundred and seventy miles from the Cape; but next day, meeting a vessel named the *Antelope*, bound to the East Indies from Table Bay, he found that L'Agulhas bore only twenty-five leagues distant. The inaccuracy of the computations of those times must needs excite the wonder of our own age of exact science. In Matthew Norwood's *System of Navigation*, "teaching the whole Art in a way more familiar, easie and practical than hath been hitherto done," published in 1692, though

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from internal evidence I gather it to have been compiled in 1683-84, there is a catalogue of the longitudes and latitudes "of the most principal places in the world, beginning from the meridian of the Lizard of England." The latitude, as a rule, is tolerably approximate, but the longitude is very much otherwise. For instance, the Cape of Good Hope is said to be in 34° 24′ S. latitude, and in 25° 33′ E. longitude. Cape Frio is put down as in 22° 55′ S. latitude, and 33° 59′ W. longitude. Cape Blanco is entered as 47° 30′ S. latitude, 62° 52′ W. longitude![1] These are representative of the whole of this singular table of calculations. Yet Norwood was greatly esteemed as a navigator, and his book was to be found in most ships' cabins. It is amazing that the early mariners were not perpetually blundering ashore. By what secret instincts they were advised I know not; yet it is certain they made as little of being a hundred miles out of their course without knowing it, as we should in these days of an error of the length of a ship's cable.

Dampier continued to sail to the eastwards, and on July 25th signs unmistakable of the neighbourhood of land were witnessed in the form of quantities of floating seaweed and moss; but it was apparently not until August 2nd that the coast hove into view, on which date Dampier says, "We stood in towards the land to look for an harbour to refresh ourselves, after a voyage of 114 degrees from Brazil." They coasted for a few days in vain search of a secure anchorage, and then observing an opening of the land they made for it, and

[1] It may spare the reader the trouble of referring to a map, to say that the longitude of the Cape is 18° 29′ E.; Frio (Brazil) 41° 57′ W.; Blanco (Peru) 81° 10′ W.

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brought up in two fathoms and a half of water. This opening Dampier called Shark's Bay, a name it has ever since retained.[1] He makes this bay to lie in 25° S. latitude and 87° longitude E. from the Cape of Good Hope, "which is less," he says, "by a hundred and ninety-five leagues than is laid down in the common draughts." He paints a pretty picture of his first view of this place, telling us of sweet-scented trees, of shrubs gay as the rainbow with blossoms and berries, of a many-coloured vegetation, red, white, yellow, and blue, the last preponderating, and all the air round about very fragrant and delicious with the perfumes of the soil. The men caught sharks and devoured them with relish,—a hint not only of very bad stores, but of provisions growing scarce; for disgusting as the salt-beef of the sea becomes after a long course of it, he must have a singular stomach and a stranger appetite who will choose shark in preference. One of the fish they captured was eleven feet long, and inside of it they found the head and bones of a hippopotamus, the hairy lips of which were still sound "and not putrefied." The jaw was full of teeth, two of them eight inches long and as big as a man's thumb; "The flesh of it was divided among my Men, and they took care that no Waste should be made of it, but thought it as things stood, good Entertainment."

They remained in Shark's Bay till the 10th, fruitlessly searching for fresh water; then coasting north-east, they fell in with a number of small rocky isles called Dampier's Archipelago, in latitude south about 20° 30′, and about 116° 30′ E. longitude. Here Dampier was so

[1] It was hereabouts that Francis Pelsart was wrecked in the *Batavia* in 1629.

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much struck with the character of the tides that he concluded there must be a passage to the south of New Holland and New Guinea to the eastward into the Great South Sea. His meaning is not clear, but then he is in the situation of a man who fires at a mark in the night; he misses, but the ball speeds in the right direction. Their pressing want was fresh water. Gangs of men were repeatedly sent ashore to seek it, but to no purpose. Their first sight of the natives was on August 31st. All sorts of signs of peace and friendship were made, but their gesticulations were probably too violent, and might even have grown alarming as contortions, and the wild men fled, menacing Dampier and his people as they ran. The only sort of intercourse they succeeded in establishing was a conflict. One of the barbarians was shot dead and an English sailor wounded. Dampier says, speaking of these natives, that they had the most unpleasant looks and the worst features of any people he ever saw, "though," says he, "I have seen a great variety of Savages." He judges that these New Hollanders were of the same race as the people he had previously met with in his first voyage round the globe, "for," he exclaims, "the Place I then touched at was not above forty or fifty Leagues to the N.E. of this, and these were much the same blinking Creatures; here being also abundance of the same kind of Flesh-flies teasing them, and with the same black Skins and Hair frizzled, tall, thin, etc., as these were; but we had not the Opportunity to see whether these, as the former, wanted two of their fore Teeth." It seems to me that he blackened his portraits of these uncomely people for the same reason that we find him later on describing

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the country sourly as though there had been little or nothing to admire; I mean with the wish to render the failure of his voyage less disappointing to his patrons at home. In short, he writes as if he would have people suppose that New Holland is a savage and worthless land, inhabited by loathsome monsters. One of the native princes he describes as painted with a circle of white pigment about his eyes, and a white streak down his nose, from the forehead to the tip of it. The breast and a portion of the arms were also whitened with the same paint. If Dampier do not exaggerate, then these embellishments which he portrays, supplementing the natural hideousness of the savages, might well cause the youthful Jack Tars who filled his forecastle to imagine themselves upon one of those enchanted, demon-haunted lands, from which the ancient mariner of the legends was wont to sail away with trembling despatch, his hair on end and his eyes half out of his head.

"If it were not," writes Dampier, "for that sort of pleasure which results from the Discovery even of the barrenest spot upon the Globe, this coast of New Holland would not have charmed me much." There is little of the enthusiasm of the explorer in this avowal; all through his career, in fact, Dampier exhibits himself as a man of caprices easily diverted from his first intentions, quickly sickened by failure, though never discomfited by the harshest sufferings or by the most formidable difficulties, so long as he can keep himself in spirits by the assurance of some approach to good fortune attending the issue of his adventure. Probably he was now willing to believe of New Holland, despite the wise conjectures with which he vitalised his early scheme, that all that remained to

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be seen was no better than what he was now viewing. Or, the length of time his voyage had already occupied had provided him with plenty of leisure for the contemplation of his prospects, and he was beginning to think that he had been misled by his original impulse, and that there was neither dignity nor profit to be got out of a toilsome survey of an obscure, remote, inhospitable coast. One sometimes likes to think of the return amongst us of such a man as this. If one could summon the dead from their sleep of centuries that they might behold the issue of the labours of the generations whose processions filled the time between their Then and our Now, it would be such old navigators as Dampier whom one would best like to arouse. Think of Cabot and Cartier going a tour through the United States, of Columbus taking ship by an ocean mail-steamer to the West Indies, of Bartholomew Diaz listening to the eloquence of South African legislators in the House of Assembly at Cape Town, of Mark de Niza at San Francisco, of Tasman at Hobart Town! As we watch Dampier digging for water amid the sand-hills of the Western Australian sea-board, the reality of the living present becomes a wonder even to us who are familiar with it. The shining cities, the flourishing towns, the radiant congregation of ships flying the flags of twenty different nationalities, every fruitful, every busy condition of commerce, manufacture, science, art, literature, entering into and stimulating the life of the highest form of human civilisation, are as miracles and as dreams to us standing in imagination by the side of the lean figure of this buccaneer, quaintly apparelled in the boots, belt, and broad hat of his old calling, and gazing with him

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upon a land whose silence is broken only by the cries of unfamiliar creatures, by the murmur of the wind among the leaves of a nameless vegetation, and by the solemn wash of the ocean surge arching in thunder upon a shore that, to the minds of hundreds and thousands away in far-off Europe, is as unreal and illusive as the islands of Plato and More. What heart would have come to our stout navigator with but the briefest of all possible prophetic glimpses into the future of that great continent on whose western sands he searches for water, reluctant, dubious, half-dismayed!

There was much, however, it must be admitted, to dishearten him. The behaviour of his crew was causing him anxiety; and about this time the scurvy broke out amongst the men. Moreover, though his people hunted diligently for fresh water, their labours were unrewarded. So Dampier determined to shape a course for Timor, if, to use his own language, he "met with no refreshment elsewhere." He had spent altogether about five weeks in cruising off the coast, covering in all, as he calculates, a range of 900 miles, but without making any sort of discovery that was in the least degree satisfactory to himself. He started afresh with the intention to steer north-east, keeping the land aboard, as sailors say. His chief and perhaps only desire at that time was to fill his casks with fresh water. They once again then lifted their anchor on December 5th, 1699, but had not measured many miles when they discovered that the numerous shoals along the coast would render an inshore voyage impracticable. Dampier thereupon bore away seawards and deepened his water from eleven to thirty-two fathoms. Next day but the merest film of land was

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in sight, and on the 7th nothing of the coast was visible, even from the masthead. By this time he was heartily weary of New Holland. He confesses his disgust very honestly, and laments the weeks he has wasted on the coast, which he believes he could have employed with greater satisfaction to himself and with larger promise of success had he pushed straight on to New Guinea. His men were drooping; the scurvy was being helped by the brackish water they were obliged to drink, and he could think of no better remedy than to shift his helm and steer away for the Island of Timor.

He gives a very close and interesting description of this island. He had certainly plenty of leisure for inspection, for he did not get under weigh again until December 12th, whence, though he does not date his arrival at Timor, we may gather that he must have stayed there for at least three months. He now headed on a straight course for New Guinea—the coast of which he discovered in the form of very high land on New Year's Day, 1700. Islands studded the water on all sides, from one of which some days afterwards they saw smoke rising. At sight of this Dampier bore away for it before a brisk gale, and anchored in thirty-five fathoms of water at the distance of about two leagues from what proved a large island. Thus they remained during the night, whilst all through the hours of darkness they observed many fires burning ashore. In the morning they weighed again and sailed closer to the land, anchoring within a mile of the beach; whereupon a couple of canoes came off to within speaking distance of the ship. The savages called to them, but their language was as unintelligible as their gestures. Dampier invited

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them by motions to step on board, but this they declined to do, though they approached so close that they were able to see the beads, knives, hatchets, and the like, which were held up with the idea of tempting them to enter the ship. Dampier then got into his pinnace and rowed shorewards. He hailed the people there in the Malay language, but they did not understand him. Numbers of the wild men lurked in ambush behind the bushes, but on Dampier throwing some knives and toys ashore they ran out, and, wading to the boat, poured water on to their heads as a sign of friendship. He describes these people as a sort of tawny Indians with long black hair, differing but slightly from the inhabitants of Mindanao. He also noticed amongst them a number of woolly-headed New Guinea negroes, most of whom he suspected were slaves to the others. The crew gave them brandy, which they drank with relish,—a behaviour that caused Dampier to suppose that, let their religion be what it would, they were not Mahometans. It is noteworthy that Tasman differs from Dampier to the extent of describing these natives as resembling the savages of New Zealand. He speaks of them as being armed with slings, darts, and wooden swords, decorated with bracelets and rings of pearl, with rings in their noses. Schouten had long previously found them a very ferocious and intractable people, who would have made themselves masters of his vessel if he had not fired upon them and put them to flight. But as in these so in those days. The world was somewhat kaleiodoscopic, and the combination of colours seen by the peering traveller at one time was by no means the same assemblage of hues viewed by other eyes at another time.

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On February 4th the *Roebuck* was off the north-west coast of New Guinea. Here Dampier found some very pleasant islands richly wooded and full of wild pigeons, and sweetened to the sight by vast spaces of white, purple, and yellow flowers, which so perfumed the wind that the fragrance could be tasted at a great distance from the shore. On one of them he stood surrounded by a portion of his crew, and after drinking the king's health, christened the spot King William's Island. Crossing the equator they proceeded to the eastward, and then, partly with the idea of escaping the perils of a navigation among shoals and islands, and partly with the hope of being rewarded for their sufferings and disappointments by some discovery of magnitude and importance, they steered the ship for the mainland. They were now within sight of a high and mountainous country, green and beautiful with tropical vegetation, and dark with forests and groves of tall and stately trees. A number of canoes came out to them, but the brief intercourse terminated in the usual way: the intentions of the natives were misunderstood; a gun was fired and several savages killed. Dampier's narrative at this point deals for some pages chiefly with the natives of New Guinea, though he shortly describes the islands and the aspect of the mainland as he sails along. So far his tone is one of disappointment, but nevertheless he keeps a very steady, honest eye upon the object of his voyage to these unknown waters. "I could have wished," he says, "for some more favourable opportunities than had hitherto offered themselves as well for penetrating into the heart of the New discovered country as for opening a Trade with its inhabitants, both of which

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I very well knew, could they be brought about, must prove extremely beneficial to Great Britain." Happily the conduct of his officers and men had improved, and they seemed as willing as he to explore the new land; but he writes with knowledge of the issue, and it is impossible to miss in this narrative of his the subdued and faltering language of a discouraged heart. On March 14th he was within view of what he terms a well-cultivated country. He observed numbers of cocoa-trees, plantations apparently well ordered, and many houses. His method of opening communication with the natives was by firing a shot over a fleet of canoes, which sent them paddling away home as fast as their crews could drive them. Presently three large boats put off, one of which had about forty men in her. The *Roebuck* lay becalmed, and it looked as if the blacks meant to attack the ship. A round shot was sent at the canoes, the savages turned about, and a light breeze springing up, the ship followed them into the bay. When close to the shore Dampier noticed the eyes of innumerable dusky-faced people peeping at the vessel from behind the rocks. A shot was fired to scare them, but they continued peeping nevertheless. Dampier seems surprised after this that the natives were unwilling to trade. The utmost they consented to do was to climb the trees for cocoanuts, which they contemptuously flung at the English with passionate signs to them to be gone.

The crew were now finding plenty of fresh water, and the ship's casks were soon filled. In spite of the defiant posture of the savages, it was agreed, after a consultation amongst the officers and men, to remain where they were

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and attempt a better acquaintance with the people of the coast. Next day whilst the boats were ashore, forty or fifty men and women passed by; they moved on quietly without offering any violence. Says Dampier, speaking of them: "I have observed among all the wild Nations I have known that they make the Women carry the burdens, while the Men walk before without carrying any other load than their arms." Extremes meet, and assuredly in some respects the most polished nation in the world is within a very measurable distance of the most savage. It does not appear that the obligation of having occasionally to kill a few natives greatly interfered with the friendly relations between them and Dampier's men. The ship's company went ashore and slaughtered and salted a good load of hogs, whilst the savages peered at them from their houses. "None offered to hinder our Boats landing," writes Dampier; "but, on the contrary, were so Amicable, that one man brought ten or twelve Cocoanuts, left them on the Shore, after he had shewed them to our Men, and went out of sight. Our People, finding nothing but nets and images, brought them away; these two of my men brought in a small Canoe; and presently after, my Boats came off. I ordered the Boatswain to take care of the nets, the images I took into my own Custody." Thus they requited the friendly disposition of these poor savages by plundering them. Who can doubt that most of the massacres of European crews by the inhabitants of countries often as beautiful and radiant as earthly paradises, the glory and sweetness of which might easily be deemed to have subdued the human beings found upon them to the tenderness and lovableness of the inspira-

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tions of the soil, the fruit, the majestic forests, the shining birds, should be the effect of traditions whose origin may be found in the barbarities practised by the early mariner?

Dampier describes the country hereabouts as mountainous and wooded, full of rich valleys and pleasant fresh-water brooks. He named it Port Montague, in honour of the patron to whom he had dedicated his first volume. The *Roebuck* sailed from this place on March 22nd, and two days afterwards, in the evening, Dampier, who was indisposed and lying down in his cabin, was hastily called on deck to behold what the crew regarded as a miracle. The wonder was no more than a burning mountain, but then those were days when enchanted islands[1] were to be met with at sea, and this great flaming scene was at once a prodigy and a terror to the sun-tanned mariners, who stared at it over the rail with every superstitious instinct in them astir. Tasman had viewed it, but the honest old Batavian did not wield Dampier's pen. It was a grand sight indeed,—a large pillar of fire crimsoning the north-west blackness, rearing its blood-red blaze higher and higher for three or four minutes at a time, then sinking till it seemed to have died, then rising afresh flaming furiously. They got a better view of this volcano a little later. "At every explosion we heard a dreadful noise like thunder, and saw a flame of fire after it the most terrifying that ever I beheld." Streams of liquid light ran down to

[1] For instance, Ringrose (Dampier's companion in Sharp's voyage) writes under date of January 9th, 1681: "There was now a great rippling sea, rising very high. It is reported there is an enchanted island hereabouts, which some positively say they have sailed over."

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the foreshore and overflowed the beach with incandescent lakes. The description of this burning mountain is, I think, one of the finest passages in Dampier's writings.

All this while he supposed that he was still off the coast of New Guinea; but following the trend of the shore, he arrived at those straits which still bear his name, and then discovered that the little country whose seaboard he had been exploring was an island. This land he called Nova Britannia, or, as we now know it, New Britain. Happy would it have been for the reputation of Dampier if, instead of steering east through his straits, he had continued to skirt the New Guinea coast to the south-east, for by so doing he must have rounded into the Gulf of Papua, struck the channel called Torres Straits, and, catching sight of Cape York, have been encouraged to pursue his exploration of the coast of New Holland on that side of the great continent whose fruitfulness, beauty, and conveniency have courted the civilisation of Europe. It is true that the *Roebuck* was provisioned for twenty months only, but an ardent and ambitious navigator would have made little or nothing of such a condition of his voyage as this when close aboard of him were lands filled with fruit, hogs, fowls, and fresh water. But there is no question that Dampier had long grown weary of this business. He could see nothing but honour (and little enough of that, as things went) to be got out of this journey, and as a poor man, with the heart of a buccaneer in him besides, he would appreciate the need of something more substantial than fame. Be this as it may, he had now, it being April 26th, 1700, started on his return home, intending on

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the way to call at Batavia to careen and doctor his crazy ship for the long voyage to England. When clear of the straits a vessel hove in sight at dusk, and as her manœuvrings were puzzling they loaded their guns, lighted the matches, and made ready to fight her. She sheered off, but was in sight at daybreak, and then proved to be nothing more dangerous than a Chinese junk laden with tea, porcelain, and other commodities, and bound for Amboyna. The *Roebuck's* progress was very slow; she was coated with weeds and barnacles, and in a sea-way her timbers worked like a basket. It was not until June 23rd that they arrived at the Straits of Sunda, and at the close of the month they dropped anchor off Batavia. Here Dampier stayed for three months whilst his ship was careened and repaired. Her condition was such that one can only wonder that he and his crew ventured to sail home in her. We might scarcely credit that Dampier's patrons honestly felt much faith in his representations, and in the hopes he held out of vast and important discoveries, when we find them putting him and his crew of boys into a ship which time had made rotten probably some years before she was equipped for this voyage, if it were not that the later experiences of Anson exhibit the same profound departmental indifference and neglect on an occasion which we may assume was regarded as far more significant than Dampier's expedition. Of all the wonderful accomplishments of the English sailor, nothing to my mind is so amazing as the triumphs with which he crowns the cause of his country in defiance of the miserable indifference of the British Admiralty to him and to his labours. The best that Dampier could do

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with his ship was so to patch her up as to enable her to carry her people home with the pumps going day and night. They sailed from Batavia on October 17th, arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on December 30th, and brought up at the island of Ascension in a sinking condition on February 21st, 1701. Even whilst Ascension was in sight the *Roebuck* had sprung a fresh leak, and when she anchored both hand and chain pumps were going. There was still a long stretch of ocean for them to traverse, and a ship like a sieve to measure it with. The tinkering of the carpenters apparently increased the mischief, and whilst Dampier was waiting below to receive the news of the leak being stopped, the boatswain arrived with a long face to tell him that the vessel was sinking. "The plank was so rotten," says Dampier, "it broke away like Dirt, and now it was impossible to save the Ship; for they could not come at the Leak because the water in the run was got above it. I worked myself to encourage my Men, who were very diligent, but the Water still increased, and we now thought of nothing but saving our lives: Wherefore I hoisted out the boat that if the Ship should sink we might be saved; and in the Morning we weighed our anchor and Warped in nearer the shore, tho' we did but little good." The men with their clothes and bedding were sent ashore on rafts; the sails were unbent and converted into tents for the use of Dampier and his officers; fresh water and rice had been landed for the use of all, "but," writes the unfortunate commander, "great part of it was stolen away before I came ashore, and many of my books and papers lost." Luckily there was no lack of turtle, but those who have

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visited Ascension will understand the distresses of a numerous crew cast away upon an uninhabited island of cinders and volcanic cones, with one green hill only far away in the middle of the calcined heap for the eye to find refreshment in. They were fortunate enough to discover a spring of fresh water; the men carried their beds into the hollows of the rocks, and perhaps thought themselves better off than in the wet, dark, half-drowned, cockroach-laden forecastle of the *Roebuck*. Moreover, in addition to turtle there were crabs, goats'-flesh, and sea-birds for food; and as the air of Ascension is about the sweetest and most wholesome in the world, the castaways kept their health and spirits, and managed on the whole very well indeed.

Their imprisonment did not last long. On April 3rd four vessels hove in sight, and in the course of the day anchored off the island. Three of them proved English men-of-war—the *Anglesea*, *Hastings*, and *Lizard;* the fourth was an East Indiaman named the *Canterbury*. Dampier went on board the *Anglesea* with thirty-five of his crew, and the remainder were divided between the other men-of-war. The ships proceeded to Barbadoes, but Dampier, with a keen sense of his misfortunes, and anxious to justify himself to his patrons, accepted an offer to return to England in the *Canterbury*. "The same earnest desire," he says, "to clear up Mistakes, to do myself Justice in the opinion of the World, and to set the Discoveries made in this unfortunate voyage in their proper Light, that it may be of use to the World, how unlucky soever it proved to me, is the reason that induced me to publish it; And I persuade myself that such as are proper Judges of these sort of Performances

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will allow that I have Delivered many things new in themselves, capable of affording much Instruction to such as meditate future Discoveries, and which in other respects may be of great utility to the present age and to posterity."

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CHAPTER V

1702–1706-7

THE VOYAGE OF THE "ST. GEORGE"

DAMPIER'S circumnavigations brought him great fame. It was deemed, and justly deemed, a remarkable feat to sail round the world in those days. Very few men had achieved it, and the names of those who had—the list prior to Dampier is brief enough—were written among the stars. Dampier had circled the globe twice, had touched at all sorts of strange and wonderful places, had held intercourse with all kinds of astonishing people, had explored some of the secret recesses of the other side of the earth, and was charged with experiences as marvellous as those of the sailor who had doubled Cape Fly-Away and dropped anchor in thick weather off No-Man's Land. His reputation stood high for this. On the other hand, nothing was thought of his discoveries. It is significant that the editor of the *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, published by the Churchills in 1704, in speaking in his "Introductory Discourse" of Dampier's books, says: "The third volume is his *Voyage to New Holland*, which has no great matter of new discovery." This opinion probably expressed the judgment of the public at large. There is indeed no great matter of

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discovery. Harris allows the voyage but one merit, namely, "That it has removed for ever those suspicions that were entertained of the accounts formerly given of those countries." "It has shown us," he says, "a new Indies in which, whenever that spirit of industry shall revive which first extended and then established our commerce, we may be able to undertake settlements as advantageous as any that have been hitherto made by this or any other nation."[1] But in sober truth, Dampier adds but little to the stock of knowledge that had been already collected from the narratives of Tasman, Pelsart, Schouten, and others who had touched at or been wrecked upon the New Holland coast. It is probable that his failure, coupled with the despondent tone that characterises his narrative, went far to retard further exploration in the Southern Ocean. It was no longer disputed that a vast body of land stood in those waters; the testimony of previous navigators was confirmed; but what was to be made of it? All that Dampier said in its favour was theoretical; all that he had to report as an eye-witness, all that he could speak to as facts, was extremely discouraging. He might even go further in his conversation than in his written story in apologising for his useless and disappointing cruise, and to his patrons add to the assurance of his narrative such persuasion of tongue as would convince them that there was nothing to be gained by further researches in Australian waters. Indeed, the depressing influence of his recorded adventures I venture to consider manifested

[1] The statements of Harris, who may be claimed as a contemporaneous authority, are interesting on this account. He writes, of course, without the prejudices of Dampier's sea-associates.

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by the directions given to the later navigators. Byron in 1764, Wallis and Mouat and Cartaret in 1766, were despatched on voyages round the world to search the South Seas for new lands; but only one of them, Cartaret, deviated into Dampier's track, confining his explorations in this way to a glance at New Guinea and New Britain, to the discovery of New Ireland, lying adjacent to the island Dampier had sailed round, and to giving names to the islands of the Soloman and other groups. The world had to wait for Cook to confirm the theories of Dampier, whose influence and example were by that time little more than traditionary.

His fame, however, as a navigator, despite the disappointments of his voyage, was unimpaired, and since employment was absolutely necessary to him as a means of living, he wisely took care on his return to make the most of his laurels whilst they were green. In 1702 he was busy in looking about him for occupation. His thirst for discovery was appeased, and he was now viewing the profession of the sea with the old yearnings of the buccaneer. Fortunately for him, the War of Succession began. The Spaniards and the French were once more the political enemies of Great Britain, but the Don in particular was the cynosure of privateering eyes. The heads of the merchants had been turned by the triumphs of the freebooters. Wonderful tales had long been current of the capture of treasure by little insignificant picaroons, and there were many private adventurers who only needed the representations of a person of Dampier's experience and credit to come willingly into a freebooting scheme against the ships and possessions of the Spaniard in the West Indies and the South Sea.

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Speculative men of substance were found and an expedition equipped, the ships being the *St. George*, Captain William Dampier, and the *Fame*, Captain John Pulling. The vessels were liberally armed and manned, and were commissioned—spite of the venture being wholly one of privateering—by Prince George of Denmark, Lord High Admiral, to cruise against the French and the Spaniards. The terms were, "No purchase, no pay!" Dampier's proposal, adopted by the promoters of the expedition, was to proceed first to the river Plate as far as Buenos Ayres, and seize two or three Spanish galleons, which he said were sure to be found there. If the plunder amounted to the value of six hundred thousand pounds they were to return home. If, on the other hand, nothing was done in the river Plate, they were to enter the South Seas and cruise for the Valdivia ships which conveyed gold to Lima. If this design failed, they were to attempt such rich towns as Dampier should think proper. Finally, they were to coast the Mexican shore to watch for the great galleon which in those days and long afterwards sailed annually filled with treasure and valuable commodities from Manila to Acapulco.

This was a broad programme, and Dampier's finger may be found in every word of it. The Acapulco ship was indeed peculiarly the dream of the buccaneer. In the galleon captured by Drake, Lopez Vaz tells us there were eight hundred and fifty thousand pieces of silver, besides many chests of treasure omitted in what was then termed the "bill of custom." Drake's men were employed six days in removing the jewels, the cases of money, the tons of uncoined silver, and the services of plate, which they found in their prize. Candish's capture of the galleon

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yielded him one hundred and twenty-two thousand pesoes of gold; the lading further consisted of silks, satins, musk, damasks, sweetmeats, and quantities of fine wines. The value of the Manila ship that Dampier was to seek and capture was appraised at nine millions of pieces of eight, equal to about a million and a half of our money.

Our sailor was wise to provide himself with alternatives which would also furnish his humour with opportunities for those sudden changes which his capricious mind demanded as a stimulant to further efforts. The story of this voyage is related by William Funnell,[1] who went as mate in the ship with Dampier. It is noticeable that, as we progress in Dampier's career, his individuality grows less and less distinguishable. He is vague in Funnell's narrative, he is vaguer still in Woodes Rogers's, and then he disappears.

There was trouble at the very onset of this voyage. Whilst in the Downs Dampier and Pulling quarrelled, and the latter, apparently not troubling himself about his agreement with his employers, made sail, and started away on a cruise among the Canary Islands on his own account. Dampier never saw him afterwards. On this a galley named the *Cinque Ports*, memorable as Alexander Selkirk's ship, commanded by one Charles Pickering, was despatched to join the *St. George* in the room of the *Fame*. She was a small vessel of some ninety tons burthen, mounting sixteen guns and carrying a crew of sixty-three men. It is declared that Pulling's defection

[1] "*Voyage Round the World*, containing an account of Captain Dampier's expedition into the South Seas, 1703-4, with the Author's Voyage from Amapalla on the West Coast of Mexico to East India," 1707.

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ruined the voyage; but this is an opinion scarcely reasonable in the face of the achievements of the buccaneers, who many of them, in vessels much smaller than the *Cinque Ports*, successfully engaged the forts and castles of powerfully protected towns, and boarded and carried galleons big enough to have stowed the conquerors' craft in their holds.

Dampier sailed on April 30th, 1703, from the Downs, and on being joined at Kinsale by the *Cinque Ports*, proceeded with his consort to Madeira. "By a good observation," says Funnell, "I make this island to lie in latitude of 32° 20′ N., and longitude, by my account from London, 18° 5′ W." This is an illustration of the value of good observations in those days! Nothing of moment happened until their arrival at an island upon the Brazilian coast. Here Captain Pickering of the *Cinque Ports* died, and Thomas Stradling, the lieutenant, took command of the ship. There was also a quarrel between Dampier, his chief officer, and eight of the crew, which terminated in the nine men going ashore with their baggage. Disappointment had soured Dampier's mind, and he was growing more obstinately fretful and quarrelsome. Much of the anxiety caused him by the behaviour of his ship's company was owing to his petulance, and to his lacking most of the qualities which command respect or enforce obedience. In truth, there had been nothing in his training to qualify him as a commander. He had passed the greater portion of his seafaring life as a sailor before the mast, amongst a community of bold and truculent ruffians who obeyed orders for the general good, but who virtually admitted no superiority in the persons whom they suffered to lead

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them. In a very short time, as we have seen, Dampier had succeeded in disgusting his consort Pulling out of an adventure, whose success might entirely depend upon his active and cordial co-operation; and now we find him abandoned by his first lieutenant and eight of the crew for reasons, I fear, it would be idle to seek elsewhere than in his own temper. Off the Horn in January, 1704, the *Cinque Ports* disappeared in the midst of a heavy storm. She was a small ship for the huge seas of those desperate parallels, and the worst was feared. Dampier's men were so disheartened that little persuasion might have been needed to determine them to abandon the voyage. Of all miserable times passed by the early mariner, the most miserable and insufferable were those which they spent off Cape Horn. Under reduced sail their little tubs showed like half-tide rocks in the troughs. The decks were full of water, the seas thundered over them in cataracts, the hatches, closed and battened down, kept the atmosphere of the 'tween decks black and poisonous. The crew were commonly so numerous as to be in one another's way, and imagination can picture nothing more unendurable than a dark and vermin-ridden forecastle crowded with half-suffocated men; the rigging and sails frozen to the hardness of iron; spears of ice hanging from the catheads and bowsprit, and from all other points from which water could drain; the ship herself rolling and tossing with sickening fury, and quivering to the thunder-shock of seas smiting her from an altitude of thirty feet. Moreover, by the time a vessel arrived off Cape Horn, she was usually short of provisions and water. She had already occupied months in making the passage, and her stores were so bad as to be rejected

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by the very rats, which, with the fearlessness and ferocity of famine, crawled out of the blackness of the hold and nibbled the feet of the sailors as they lay dozing on their chests. Captain George Shelvocke, writing in 1726, has left us a gloomy picture, full of power, of the Horn in winter. "I must own," he says, "the navigation here is truly melancholy, and it was the more so to us who were a single ship and by ourselves in this vast and dreadful solitude; whereas a companion would have mixed some cheerfulness with the thoughts of being in so distant a part of the world exposed to such dangers, and, as it were, separated from the rest of mankind. The very thoughts of the possibility of losing our masts by the violence of such very stormy weather as we had had were enough to cast a damp upon the clearest spirits."[1]

It was not until February 7th that Juan Fernandez showed above the horizon. Dampier concluded that it was some other island, and stood away east, to the grief and disappointment, as one may suppose, of his starved and scorbutic crew, tantalised by the spectacle of green hills and sparkling falls of fresh water. On the 11th, having sailed a considerable distance towards the American seaboard, he decided that the land he had sighted was the island he sought, and thereupon shifted his helm for it; and on his arrival, passing by the great bay, he saw, to his own and to the great delight of his crew, the *Cinque Ports* quietly lying at

[1] *A Voyage Round the World by the way of the Great South Sea*, by Captain George Shelvocke. Second Edition, 1757, p. 76. The whole description of his passage of the Horn, with his sketch of Staten Island, "covered with snow to the very wash of the sea," is admirable.

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anchor, she having made the land three days before. Both vessels were heeled and refitted, which, with the watering of them, gave the crews plenty of employment; but whilst this was doing another quarrel happened, this time between Captain Stradling and his men. We may suspect Stradling's character from Alexander Selkirk's hatred of him, though there is no doubt that Selkirk himself was on the whole about as troublesome a seaman to deal with as ever stepped a deck. Dampier, it is true, afterwards told Captain Woodes Rogers that he considered Selkirk, who in the expedition I am now writing about was master of the *Cinque Ports*, to have been the best man in that ship; but then Dampier had quarrelled with Stradling and abhorred his memory, and so, I do not doubt, made the most of Selkirk to Rogers, that he might suggest rather than boldly affirm his former consort equal to so base and cruel a deed as the marooning of a good and honest sailor; albeit Rogers was perfectly well aware that Selkirk had gone ashore of his own choice.[1] The quarrel between Stradling and his men rose to such a height that the crew absolutely refused to go on board and serve under him. Dampier was consulted, and after a deal of trouble succeeded in persuading the fellows to return to their duty. It is to be feared that this happy turn of what threatened to prove a very grave difficulty owed little or nothing to Dampier's address or to his popularity. It is a common saying at sea amongst sailors who dislike their captain that they will weather him out even if he were the devil

[1] I should add, however, that on Selkirk repenting his rash decision, and requesting leave to return to his duty, Stradling refused to receive him on board.

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himself; meaning that they will not suffer themselves to be defrauded by his tyranny of their wages or such good prospects as the voyage may promise. The sober-headed amongst Stradling's crew would not take long to see the folly of abandoning an adventure that had brought them to the very threshold of their hopes, particularly after having endured all the distress and misery of the passage of the Horn in a vessel but a very little bigger than a fishing-smack of to-day. It is more than likely then that Dampier's counsel found most of them sensible of their mistake and willing to resume work.

Whilst the people were ashore busy on various jobs relating to the doctoring of their ships, the day being February 29th, 1704, a sail was sighted, an alarm raised, and a rush made on board. The two vessels instantly slipped their cables and stood out to sea. The stranger, on perceiving the canvas of the two crafts growing large upon the background of the island, bouted ship and went away under a press; but Dampier clung to his wake, and the *Cinque Ports* made all possible haste to follow. The breeze blew briskly, and the *St. George* was thrashed through it so fleetly that she towed her pinnace under water and was forced to cut her loose. Captain Stradling's boat, in which were a man and a dog, also went adrift, but of her and her inmates we get news later on. It was not until eleven o'clock at night that the *St. George* came up with the chase, and Dampier wisely deferred hostilities until the day dawned. The stranger proved a Frenchman of four hundred tons and thirty guns, full of men; and at sunrise on March 1st the *Cinque Ports* and the *St. George* attacked her. The galley, however, was of little use, for after discharging a dozen guns she fell astern,

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and left the game to be played out by Dampier. "We fought her very close," says Funnell, "Broadside and Broadside for seven Hours; and then a small Gale springing up she sheered off." Old conflicts of this kind are quaint with the colours of an utterly extinct form of marine life. The seamen fought with guns bearing strange names. The heaviest marine-ordnance was the demi-cannon, whose bore was six and three-quarter inches, and the weight of the shot thirty pounds and a half. There were also the cannon-petro, that threw a twenty-four pound shot; the basilisk, the weight of whose shot was fifteen pounds; the sacre or sacar, as Sir William Monson spells it, a little piece of a bore of three inches and a half that cast a shot weighing five pounds; and smaller guns yet called the minion, the falcon, the serpentine, and the rabanet, the last carrying a shot of half a pound. It is difficult to conjecture the calibre of such ordnance as Dampier and his enemy were armed with. Probably the cannon-petro was their biggest piece, and they would also carry swivel-guns. It will be evident at all events that such a vessel as the *Cinque Ports*, whose tonnage is put down at ninety, and which is said to have been armed with sixteen guns, must have mounted very light metal if only to render her seaworthy. But besides their falcons and sacars and minions, they engaged with other strange engines,—arrows trimmed with wild-fire, pikes flaming with the same stuff for piercing a ship's side, shells called granados filled with powder and thrown on to a vessel's deck with a fuze alight, powder-pots formed of clay or thick glass, and stink-balls, for the making of which old Norwood prescribes as follows:

"Take Powder 10l., of Ship-pitch 6l., of Tar 20l.,

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Salt Peter 8l., Sulphur Califonia 4l. Melt these by a soft heat together; and being well melted, put 2l. of cole-dust, of the filings of Horses-hoofs 6l., Assa Fœtita 3l., Sagapenem 1l., Spatula Fœtida half a pound: Incorporate them well together, and put into this matter Linnen or Woollen-Cloathe, or Hemp or Toe as much as will drink up all the matter: and of these make Globes or Balls of what bigness you please. This Globe or Ball may be made venomous or poysonous, if to the Composition be added these things following: Mercury Suplimate, Arsnick, Orpiment, Sinaber, etc."[1]

This horrible contrivance, when thrown among the surging crowd, threw out volumes of poisonous and suffocating smoke. A sea-fight was a fierce business—fiercer, perhaps, than we can realise when we contrast the armaments of those days with the leviathan guns of the ironclad. The devices for slaughtering were full of the genius of murder. They had cohorns or small mortars fixed on swivels; caissons, called "powder-chests," charged with old nails and rusty bits of iron for firing from the close-quarters when boarded; weapons named "organs," formed of a number of musket-barrels fired at once. Above all, they had what I fear is lost to us for ever,—I mean the boarding-pike, the deadliest of all weapons in the hands of the British sailor. The mere naming of a yard-arm to yard-arm engagement lasting seven hours is hint enough to the imagination of a man conversant with the tactics, the brutal courage, the remorseless resolution, the deadly if primitive fighting machinery of the sea-braves of the old generations. The castellated fabric rolling upon the seas, echoing in

[1] Norwood's *Navigation*, already referred to.

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thunder to the blasts which roar from her wooden sides; the crowds of men swaying half-naked at the guns; the falling spars; the riddled sails; the great tops filled with smoke-blackened sailors wildly cheering as they fling their granados upon the decks of the enemy, or silent as death as they level their long and clumsy muskets at forms distinguished as the leaders of the fight by their attire, combine in a picture that rises in crimson-tinctured outlines upon the dusky canvas of the past, and, though two centuries old, startles and fascinates as if it were a memory of yesterday. But the old voyagers' references to such things are grimly brief. They dismiss in a sentence as much as might fill a volume; yet what they have to say is suggestive enough, and the fancy is feeble that cannot colour their black and white outlines to the fiery complexion of a reality, and vitalise them with the living hues of the time in which the deeds were done.

The battle was ended by a small gale of wind coming on to blow, and by the Frenchman running away. On board Dampier were nine killed and several wounded. Funnell says that the sailors were anxious to follow and fight the Frenchman again, and sink or capture him, fearing that if he escaped he would make their presence known to the Spaniards. But Dampier objected, protesting that even if the enemy should hear of them and stop their merchantmen from leaving harbour, "he knew where to go, and did not fear of failing to take to the value of £500,000 any day in the year." This assurance sufficiently satisfied the men to induce them to back their topsail to wait for the *Cinque Ports*, and on her coming up with the *St. George*, Dampier briefly conferred

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with Stradling, who agreed with him that they should let the Frenchman go. The privateers thereupon headed on their return to Juan Fernandez to recover the anchors, long-boats, casks of fresh water, and sea-lions' oil which they had left there; along with five of the crew of the *Cinque Ports*, who had been ashore on the west side of the island when the ships hurriedly made sail after the Frenchman. The wind was south, right off the land, and whilst they were struggling to fetch the bay two ships unexpectedly hove in view. The *Cinque Ports*, being near them, fired several shots, and then, having her sweeps out, rowed to the *St. George* to report that the strangers were Frenchmen, each mounting about thirty-six guns. It is conceivable that Dampier might not consider his ship, fresh as she was from a tough conflict, in a fit state to engage these two large, well-armed vessels; nor, after the part his consort had borne in the late action, was he likely to place much faith in Stradling's co-operation. He thereupon determined to stand away for the coast of Peru, an unintelligible resolution when it is remembered that they would not only be leaving five of Stradling's men behind, but furniture and stores absolutely essential to their security and to the execution of their projects. They might surely have lingered long enough in the neighbourhood of the island to persuade the Frenchman that they were gone for good. A run of fifteen or twenty miles would have put them out of sight. And they might also have reckoned upon the unwillingness of the enemy to fight; for the French equally with the Spanish seafarers in those days were commonly very well satisfied with the negative victory of the foe's retreat.

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The two ships fell in with the coast of Peru on March 11th. Funnell makes the latitude of the land 24° 53′ S. Thence they coasted to the northwards, and on the 14th passed the port of Copiapo, used by the Spaniards for loading wine, money, and other goods for Coquimbo. They would have been glad to go ashore for refreshments, but were in the unhappy situation of being without boats. On the 22nd, when off Lima, they chased a couple of vessels which were steering for that port. On coming up with the sternmost Dampier found her to be the ship he had fought off the island of Juan Fernandez. The crew were eager to engage her, so as to prevent her from entering Lima, still dreading the consequence of the Spaniards gaining intelligence of English freebooters being in those waters. Moreover Funnell asserts that not a man on board doubted the possibility of taking her, because the crew were now in good health, whereas when they had engaged her some twenty or thirty of them were upon the sick-list. They also wanted her guns, ammunition, and provisions, and proposed that the *St. George* should fight her whilst Stradling attacked the other; but Dampier was not of their mind, and whilst all hands were hotly debating the matter, the Frenchmen, if indeed they were both French, got into Lima. It would be absurd to accuse Dampier of want of courage, but it is strange that, after chasing the two strangers from no other motive that seems intelligible than the design to fight and capture them, he should draw off on discovering one of them to be his enemy of Juan Fernandez. He was commissioned to attack the vessels both of France and Spain, and as there was much to be gained by the conquest of the ships, his

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reluctance or refusal as the chief of a crew eager for the fray is unaccountable.

Funnell writes with no kindness for Dampier; but he doubtless speaks the truth when he asserts that the men were greatly incensed by their commander's refusal to fight, insomuch that something like a mutiny might have followed had they not been mollified by the capture, in the space of a few days, of two prizes—one of one hundred and fifty, the other of two hundred tons. Meanwhile Dampier was maturing a mighty project of landing on the coast and plundering some rich city. Preparations for this great event filled the ship with business. All day long the carpenters were employed in fitting out fabrics called Spanish long-boats to enable the sailors to enter the surf with safety. In every launch were fixed two patareros, swivel-guns of small calibre. Fortune so far favoured them that, on April 11th, they met and took a vessel of fifty tons, laden with plank and cordage, "as if she had been sent on purpose for our service," says Funnell. Carrying this useful prize with them, they sailed to the island of Gallo, where they dropped anchor and took in fresh water, and further prepared their ship and the prize for the grand undertaking they were about to enter upon. At the expiration of five days they were ready; but whilst they were in the act of getting under weigh a ship was seen standing in. They were in a proper posture to take her, and in a short while she was theirs. The capture was unimportant, the craft being only fifty tons; but it is noticeable for their finding on board a Guernsey man, who had been taken by the Spaniards two years before as he was cutting logwood in the Bay of Campechè, and who must have continued a

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prisoner for life if they had not released him. Dampier's El Dorado was the town of Santa Maria. It was to the mines lying adjacent to this place that he would have been glad to convey the thousand slaves who had been captured in an earlier voyage. It was his intention now to attack it, for he had no doubt that it was full of treasure. But his evil star was dominant. The enemy, apprised of his being in the neighbourhood, met him at all points with ambuscades, which, Funnell tells us, cut off abundance of the men. He may have lacked the power of organisation; he may have been wanting in the quality to swiftly decide, and in the power to unfalteringly execute; it is equally probable that his schemes were perplexed and his hopes ruined by the insubordination of a crew whom he was not sufficiently master of his temper to control. Be the reason of the failure what it will, the men grew so weary of their fruitless attempts on shore that they returned to their ship without regard to the wishes of the commander. Then they were beset with new troubles, chief amongst which was a great scarcity of provisions. Fortunately at this critical juncture a ship of one hundred and fifty tons, ignorant of their character, dropped anchor within gunshot of them. Needless to say that she was promptly captured, and, to the delight of the hungry and hollow-cheeked survivors of Dampier's mighty land-project, was found filled to the hatches with flour, sugar, brandy, wine, thirty-two tons of marmalade, a large stock of linen and woollen cloth, and, in a word, such a store of food and goods as might have served to victual and equip them for four or five years. Funnell was put on board this prize on behalf of Captain Dampier and the people of the *St. George*, whilst the master

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of the *Cinque Ports*—Alexander Selkirk—was transferred to her as representing the interests of Captain Stradling and his ship's company. The vessels then proceeded to the Bay of Panama, and anchored off the island of Tobago.

They had not long arrived when Dampier and Stradling fell out. The quarrel between the men was so hot that there was nothing for it but to part company. One is willing to hope that Stradling was to blame. He was a man of a coarse mind, a person of violent temper, and of a low habit of thought; and nothing, probably, but the circumstance of their being in separate ships and removed from each other hindered the two captains from separating long before. Five of the *St. George's* men went over to Stradling, and five of the *Cinque Ports* crew joined Dampier. It was now that some prisoners who were in the last prize that had been taken affirmed that there were eighty thousand dollars secreted on board of her. The money, they said, had been taken in very privately at Lima, and it lay hidden in the bottom of the ship in the part called the run. Dampier refused to credit this, and would not even take the trouble to ascertain the truth by setting the men to rummage the hold. His mind, Funnell tells us, was so full of great designs that he would not risk them by such delay as a brief search might involve. It is unfortunate for his reputation that a considerable portion of his sea-going career has to be tracked through the relations of men with whom he quarrelled, or who, by association with him during months of the imprisonment of shipboard life, grew intimately acquainted with the weaknesses of his character.

On May 19th the *St. George* parted company with

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the *Cinque Ports*, and steered northwards with the intention of cruising off the Peruvian coast. The subsequent recorded career of Stradling is very brief. His men were too few to qualify him for achievements in the South Sea. He repaired to Juan Fernandez for shelter and refreshment, where, as all the world knows, Alexander Selkirk left him, partly on account of his hatred of the captain, and partly because of the unseaworthy condition of the galley. Not long afterwards the *Cinque Ports* foundered off the American coast, with the loss of all hands excepting Stradling and seven of his men, who were sent prisoners by the Spaniards to Lima, in which city Stradling was still living when Dampier came afterwards into these waters as Woodes Rogers's pilot. What afterwards became of him is not known.

Nothing of interest occurred in Dampier's progress north for nearly a month, and then on June 7th they captured a vessel bound to Panama, laden with sugar and brandy and bales of wrought silk. In this ship was a letter addressed to the President of Panama by the captain of the French man-of-war they had fought. It was all about the action with the *St. George*, and the writer boasted of having killed a great number of the English, whilst he himself had sent ashore at Lima thirty-two of his men, all whom had been disabled either by the loss of a leg or an arm or an eye; and he added that, had Dampier chosen to follow and re-engage him, he must have been captured. Funnell prints this with evident relish as justifying the attitude of the crew of the *St. George*, and as an impeachment of Dampier's judgment and possibly his courage. In another letter it was related that the two French ships at which Strad-

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ling had fired, and from which Dampier had made sail, had picked up the boat containing the man and dog that had broken loose from the *Cinque Ports;* also that they had taken off the men who had been left on the island, together with the privateersmen's anchors, cables, long-boat, and stores. It was further ascertained from these letters that the Spaniards had fitted out two ships to cruise in search of Dampier—one of thirty-two brass guns, twenty-four pounders each; the other of thirty-six guns of the same calibre; each vessel had three hundred and fifty seamen and one hundred and fifty soldiers, all picked men. It does not seem, however, that Dampier allowed his projects to be diverted by these men-of-war. He knew they were off Guayaquil, and on June 21st we find him in the bay named after that port with a sail in sight, which next day proved to be one of the Spanish ships—the one of thirty-two guns. "Being pretty near each other," says Funnell, "they gave us a Broadside, but we did not mind them." Dampier's chief anxiety was to get the weather-gage. The wind was half a gale, and in manœuvring the *St. George's* foretop-mast went over the side. Hatchets were seized and the wreckage cut away, and the instant his ship was clear Dampier put his helm up and got his vessel before it. This inspired the enemy with wonderful spirit. He crowded all the canvas he dared show to that wind, and started in pursuit; whereupon Dampier, observing that his behaviour was animating the Spaniards with courage, resolved to bring the *St. George* to the wind and fight it out. Funnell relates this incident very brightly. "Captain Dampier's opinion was that he could sail better upon one Mast than the Enemy, and therefore it was best to

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put before the Wind; but, however, chose rather to fight than to be chased ashore: So hoisting the bloody Flag at the Main-topmast-head with a Resolution neither to give or to take Quarter, we began the Fight, and went to it as fast as we could load and fire. The Enemy kept to Windward at a good Distance from us; so that we could not come to make use of our Small-arms: But we divided the two Watches; and one was to manage the Guns whilst the other looked on; and when those at the Guns were weary, the other were to take their Places till they had refreshed themselves. By this means we fired, I believe, five Guns to the Enemy's one. We fired about 560, and he about 110 or 115; and we fought him from twelve at Noon to Half an Hour to Six at Night, altho' at a good Distance; for he kept so far to Windward of us that our Shot sometimes would hardly reach him, tho' his would at the same time fly over us." The cannonading—it came to no more—terminated when the darkness fell. Dampier lay hove-to all night waiting for the morning, but at daybreak nothing was to be seen of the Spaniard. The action was merely a shooting match, and the privateers had not a man killed nor even hurt by the enemy.

Our hero's next step was to seek provisions and water. The district, however, yielded him nothing, and he was forced to rest satisfied with the lading of a couple of small vessels, which he captured. One of them he fitted out as a long-boat, and called her the *Dragon*. They were now in the Gulf of Nicoya and at anchor close to Middle Island, as Funnell terms it; and here it was they careened their ship, all hands going ashore and building tents for the cooper and sailmaker, and for the storage

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of goods and provisions. Whilst this was doing Dampier sent his mate, John Clipperton, and twenty men armed to the teeth for a cruise in the *Dragon*. He found his account in this little expedition, for at the end of six days the *Dragon* returned with a Spanish craft of forty tons freighted with brandy, wine, and sugar. Amongst her people were six carpenters and caulkers, who had been shipped by the owner for the purpose of repairing her, and these men Dampier immediately set to work upon his own ship. The bottom of the *St. George*, after she had been careened, is described as resembling a honeycomb. Nowhere was the plank much thicker than an old sixpence; so sodden and rotten was the wood that Funnell declares in some places he could easily have thrust his thumb through it. They were without timber to sheath her, and all that could be done was to stop the leaks with nails and oakum.

Whilst the ship was in the hands of the carpenters Dampier and Clipperton fell out, and the mate, with a following of twenty-one men, mutinously seized the bark that the *Dragon* had brought in, lifted her anchor and sailed away outside the islands. Shelvocke, who was afterwards associated with Clipperton, gives this man so bad a character in his book that, if he possessed the same qualities as Dampier's mate which he afterwards exhibited as Shelvocke's consort, one can only wonder that the captain of the *St. George* had not long before marooned or pitched him overboard. The loss of these twenty-two men was a serious blow, but the defection might have resulted more seriously even than this to Dampier, for all the *St. George's* ammunition and the greater part of her provisions were in the bark when

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the mate seized her. Fortunately Clipperton was not wholly a villain. Shortly after his departure he sent word that he would put the stores belonging to the *St. George* ashore in a house, keeping only what he required for his own use. He was as good as his word; canoes were despatched, and the powder and provisions were recovered. This man Clipperton was afterwards the hero of some strange adventures. Harris calls him a man of parts and spirit, but not the less was he the completest rogue at that time afloat. He professed to have left Dampier for the same reason that had caused Alexander Selkirk to live all alone by himself,—I mean the craziness of the ship; but surely he must have been a rascal to have abandoned Dampier in the hour of his need. Yet he was not wanting in the audacious courage that was the characteristic of his buccaneering compeers. In his little bark, armed with two patareros, he sailed to the coast of Mexico, captured a couple of ships, one of which he sunk; whilst for the other being new he demanded ten thousand pieces of eight by way of ransom, and got four thousand. He then sailed to the Gulf of Salinas, cleaned his cockle-shell of a boat, and made for the East Indies, reaching the Philippine Islands in fifty-four days. He afterwards bore away for Macao, where his crew left him. He returned to England in 1706, and in 1718 obtained command of the *Success*, consort to the *Speedwell*, whose captain, Shelvocke, was under him. He abandoned Shelvocke, and though they afterwards met in the South Sea, declined to consort with him in any way. His adventures are one of the most interesting chapters in the annals of the buccaneers. He returned home in or about the year 1722, and

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shortly afterwards died of a broken heart, utterly destitute.

But to return to Dampier. By October 7th he was again in a condition to embark upon further adventures. One notices with admiration his resolution to keep the sea in an under-manned craft so rotten and crazy that he might reasonably fear the first gale of wind must pound her into staves. But the forlorn hope was often the old buccaneer's best opportunity. Exquemeling, or Esquemeling as the name is sometimes spelt, tells of the pirate Le Grand that when famine-stricken in a small boat in company with a few armed men, he ordered one of his people to bore a hole through the craft's bottom whilst approaching the vessel he meant to board, that success might be as sure as desperation could render it. There was something probably of Le Grand's spirit in Dampier's policy. His men were few, and he might have found it necessary to animate them by an alternative whose issue could only mean either conquest or destruction.

He was now cruising for the Acapulco ship, the most romantic and golden of all the hopes and dreams of the privateersman. There were no limits to the fancies her name conjured up. Imagination was dazzled by visions of chests loaded with virgin gold and unminted silver, by cases of costly ecclesiastical furniture, crucifixes, chalices, and candlesticks of precious ore, images glorious with jewels, plate of superb design, treasure equalling in value the revenues of a flourishing principality. They fell in with her on December 6th, in the morning. The crew, Funnell drily tells us in effect, had looked out for her as though there were no difference between seeing

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and taking her. They were indeed in the right kind of mood for fighting. Their appetites had been whetted by disappointment, and they were weary of a cruise that had yielded them little more in the way of captures than provisions, which their necessities quickly forced them to consume. They were also sulky with the defection of comrades, and every piratical instinct in them was rabidly yearning after a prize which would enable them to sail straight away home, with plenty of money for all hands in their hold. They pluckily bore down to the tall fabric whose high sides were crowned with the defences of bristling tiers of guns, and saluted her with several broadsides. The galleon, not suspecting them to be an enemy, was unprepared; the sudden bombardment threw her people into confusion, and the sailors—wretched seamen, as the Spaniards even at their best were in those days—tumbled over each other in their clumsy hurry to defend themselves. There was one Captain Martin on board with Dampier, who, though born a Spaniard, had been bred and educated in London. He had been taken out of a ship captured by the *St. Georgè* in the preceding October. This Martin, whose sympathies appear to have been with the English, advised Dampier to take advantage of the confusion in the galleon, and lay her aboard. Indeed it hardly required a practised seafaring eye to perceive that, if the Spaniard once got his batteries to bear, he would, to employ Martin's language, "beat the *St. George* to pieces." The value of the ship was reckoned at sixteen million pieces of eight. That Dampier should have hesitated is incomprehensible. Boarding was his only chance; he must have known that; and yet he would

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not board. Hesitation was of course fatal. The enemy brought his guns to bear, and it was then impossible for the *St. George* to lie alongside of her. The privateersmen had nothing to throw but five-pound shot; the galleon, on the other hand, mounted eighteen and twenty-four pounders. In a very short time the *St. George* was struck between wind and water in her powder-room, and two feet of plank were driven in under either quarter; after which nothing remained to Dampier but to make his escape whilst his crazy ship continued to swim.

The bitterly disappointed crew clamoured to return home. Fortune was against them, and the superstitions of the forecastle were confirming the experiences of the voyage. Further, there were scarcely provisions enough to last them for another three months, whilst the ship herself was in a condition to fall to pieces at any moment. Less than this might sufficiently justify the mutinous posture of the disgusted men. Nevertheless Dampier persuaded them to prolong the cruise for another six weeks, promising at the expiration of that time to carry them to some factory in India, "where," says Funnell, "we might all dispose of ourselves, as we should think most for our advantage." This being settled they proceeded to the eastward, keeping the land in sight, but though they passed Acapulco and other considerable ports, I do not observe that Dampier attempted a single town, or even sought a prize on the water. Apparently the sole object of this trip was to find a convenient place for watering the ship and the prize which they had with them,—that is to say, the bark out of which they had taken Captain Martin,—preparatory for their departure. But on January 6th, 1705, a month after their

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encounter with the Manila ship, there happened what Funnell speaks of as a revolution in their affairs, "for thirty of our Men," he continues, "agreed with Captain Dampier to remain with him in the South Seas, but with what View or on what Terms remained to us who were not of that Number an impenetrable secret." It is as likely as not that this was no new caprice on the part of Dampier, and very possibly his motive in asking the men to continue the cruise for another six weeks was that he might have time to induce them to continue with him for an indefinite term upon the South American seaboard. Funnell's party consisted of thirty-three men, which represents the force of Dampier's crew at that time to have been sixty-three, not counting himself. That thirty should decide to remain with him, and that thirty-three should be, so to speak, forced to abandon him without having any knowledge whatever of the understanding between their shipmates and the commander, is so inexplicable that I suspect some blunder or concealment in Funnell's narrative at this point. It is, indeed, just probable that Funnell and his thirty-two associates were, by reason of bad health, disaffection, and other causes, scarcely worth mustering. Yet they made shift nevertheless to carry their wretched little vessel to the East Indies, and one might suppose that Dampier would still have found his account in men who could prove themselves qualified for such a navigation as that. Or it is conceivable that Funnell and the others were sick of the cruise and afraid of the ship, whilst Dampier—that he might prevent the whole crew from abandoning him—made golden promises under a pledge of secrecy, which proved sufficiently potent to work upon

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the imaginations of thirty of the men, and to determine them to give their captain another chance.

Be all this as it may, the *St. George* and the bark proceeded amicably together to the Gulf of Amapalla, at which place they arrived on January 26th, and the people at once went to work to divide the provisions between the two ships. Before the bark sailed two of the men who had resolved to stay with Captain Dampier left him, and joined Funnell's party, which now numbered thirty-five—namely, thirty-four English and a negro-boy. Meanwhile Dampier's men were busy in refitting their craft. The carpenter stopped the holes which the cannon-balls of the galleon had made in her with tallow and charcoal, not daring to drive in a nail. Four guns were struck into the hold, which yet left sixteen mounted, a greater number than Dampier had men to fight, if the need arose, "for," says Funnell, "there remained with him no more than twenty-eight Men and Boys, and most of them landmen; which was a very insignificant Force for one who was to make War on a whole Nation." One might think that the spectacle of such a ship as this would inspire even a larger spirit of desertion than her crew manifested. Certainly there was nothing in the aspect of the tottering and rotten vessel to coax Funnell and his companions back into Dampier's service. They were supplied with four pieces of cannon, along with a fair proportion of small arms and ammunition, and on February 1st they bade farewell to their old associates and started on their perilous voyage.

The subsequent adventures of Dampier need not take long to relate. As we have seen, his crew consisted of twenty-eight men only; the *St. George* was in a pitiable

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condition, her seams open, every timber in her decayed, her sails and rigging worn out, and in no sense was she fit to keep the sea. Dampier was in the situation of a gambler who has lost all but the guinea which he now proposes to stake. Indeed, we find him throughout confiding a great deal too much in luck. It is seldom that he attempts to force fortune's hand by prompt, vigorous, and original measures. One by one his brother officers had abandoned him; his crew had deserted him by the score at a time; and yet in a ship rotten to the heart of her, and with a beggarly following of twenty-eight gaunt and dissatisfied men, he clings to the scene of his distresses and his disappointments with no further expectation than the gambling hope that, since he is at the very bottom of the wheel, the next revolution must certainly raise him. Had he and his twenty-eight men come fresh to these seas, they might have flattered themselves with brilliant prospects; smaller companies of buccaneers had achieved incredible things, enlarged their ranks as they progressed, shifted their flag from ship to ship, until they found themselves in possession of a fleet equal to any such force as the enemy in those waters had it in his power to send against them. But Dampier's men were dissatisfied and miserable, surly and despondent with disappointment, and exhausted by privation and severe labours. They looked at the future as promising but a darker picture of what they had already suffered. It was indeed time for them to go home; the privateering spirit amongst them was moribund; all heart had been taken out of them. It speaks well for Dampier's personal influence, whilst it also illustrates his singular genius of persuasion, that he should have succeeded in keeping these

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men together by representations in which possibly he had as little faith as they. He told them that there was nothing easier than to make their fortunes by surprising some small Spanish town, and that the fewer there were of them, the fewer there would be to share the booty. They listened and sullenly acquiesced—animated, perhaps, by a faint expiring gleam of their old buccaneering instincts. Thereupon Dampier attacked Puna in Ecuador, then a village formed of a small church and about thirty houses. The night was dark when he landed, the inhabitants were in bed; no resistance was offered, and the place was captured without trouble. Having plundered this town, they sailed to Lobos de la Mar, where they let go their anchor, whilst they deliberated what they should do next. On the way to this island they captured a small Spanish vessel full of provisions. Dampier called a council, and it was resolved that they should quit the *St. George* and sail away to the East Indies in their prize. It is manifest from this resolution that their easy plundering of Puna, and their equally easy capture of the bark,[1] had failed to reconcile them to a longer cruise against the Spaniards. Having transferred everything likely to be of use to them from the *St. George*, they left that crazy fabric rolling at her anchor and steered westwards for the Indies.

What adventures they met with on their way I do not know. Harris says that on their arrival at one of the

[1] This term "bark" is used generically by the old writers. Rigs were few, and vessels, it would seem, took their names from their dimensions, as galleon, carrack, galley, and the like. In our own times—and it has been so for a century and a half, at least—a craft is defined by her rig. Thus a vessel rigged as a ship would be called a ship though she were only fifty tons.

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Dutch settlements their ship was seized, their property confiscated, and themselves turned loose to shift as they best could. Dampier succeeded in making his way home. He arrived, as was customary with him, a beggar. But the reports of his voyage considerably enlarged his reputation. The world pitied the misfortunes whilst it admired the ambitious efforts and the bold projects of a seaman of whose nationality every Englishman was proud. By command of the Queen he was presented to her, kissed her hand, and had the honour of relating his adventures to her. But all this left him poor, and it was now his business once more to look about him for further occupation.

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CHAPTER VI

1708–1711

THE VOYAGE WITH WOODES ROGERS [1]

DAMPIER probably obtained the next berth we find him filling through the influence of Woodes Rogers. There is no doubt that it was owing to Dampier's influence and representations that the expedition under Rogers was equipped and despatched. Harris tells us that he addressed himself to the merchants of Bristol, who listened to his proposals with patience and interest. At all events his experience would enable him to submit to them that his own, and indeed the failures of others, were owing, not to the voyage being a dangerous or difficult one, not to the courage nor to the superior strength of the enemy, not to any lack of the right kind of qualities amongst the crews, but simply to those undertakings having been badly organised at the start, unwisely

[1] "*A Cruising Voyage Round the World:* first to the South Seas, thence to the East Indies, and homewards by the Cape of Good Hope. Begun in 1708 and finished in 1711. Containing a Journal of all the Remarkable Transactions; particularly of the taking of Puna and Guayaquil, of the Acapulco ship, and other Prizes. An Account of Alexander Selkirk's living alone four years and four months on an Island; and a brief Description of several Countries in our Course noted for Trade, especially in the South Sea, etc." By Captain Woodes Rogers, 1712.

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officered, and injudiciously conducted. The Bristol merchants fully agreed with him, and illustrated the spirit of their concurrence by fitting out two ships and refusing him any post of command. He and Rogers had long been acquainted, as may be gathered from several passages in his voyages. There is little question that it was Dampier's reputation which procured him his appointment as pilot to his friend; but I take it that Rogers warmly supported Dampier's solicitations, and that the advocacy of the chief commander proved powerful enough to neutralise, or at least to qualify, the prejudice which our hero's misfortunes as a freebooter and his half-heartedness as an explorer had excited against him.

As a pilot there was no man then living better qualified. He had spent long months of his life in the South Seas, and his knowledge of Indian and Pacific waters was varied and extensive. His name was also formidable to the Spaniards, a detail of considerable moment in the catalogue of privateering merits. His dignity could suffer nothing by his acceptance of the post of pilot to the expedition. Many sea-words have changed their old signification, and when we now talk of a pilot we think of a man whose business it is to navigate ships through short spaces of dangerous waters. There were of course pilots of this kind in Dampier's day. But in addition there were mariners selected for their knowledge of distant parts to accompany ships in voyages round the world, or to the ports of remote nations. The post was an honourable one; the pilot stood alone; he had not indeed the captain's general powers, but his duties were attended with many privileges, and he was looked up to as a person of authority and distinction. It was

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such a position then as Dampier would have been willing to accept even though he had earned the value of an estate by his last voyage.

The expedition was promoted, as has already been said, by a number of Bristol merchants. Twenty-two names are given as representing only a portion of this very large committee of adventurers. The chief command was entrusted to Captain Woodes Rogers, a man who had suffered much from the French, and who was eager to repair as well as to avenge his injuries by reprisals. He had long been known as an intelligent officer and an excellent seaman. He had also a name as a disciplinarian, and he was further remarkable for the swiftness and sagacity of his decisions in moments of difficulty and peril. In point of literary merit his book is worthy to rank with Shelvocke's narrative, though the form and spirit of both are manifestly inspired by Dampier's volumes. The captain next in command was Stephen Courtney, who was also a member of the committee and the holder of a considerable share in the speculation. Rogers's second captain, or chief mate as he would now be called, was Thomas Dover, a physician by profession, who in his old age wrote a work called *Dr. Dover's Last Legacy to his Country*, in which he so effectually recommended the use of quicksilver that "ladies as well as gentlemen of rank and fortune bespangled the floors and carpets with this metal, and scattered their diamonds wherever they went to dance or to play."[1] It is strange to hear of a doctor of medicine going as lieutenant of a buccaneering craft;

[1] *An Historical Account of all the Voyages Round the World*, vol. i. 1773.

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but it is stranger yet to read that Dover's bad temper was the cause of his being chosen. Yet his chief recommendation lay in his violent tongue, which, it was argued, would effectually prevent him from winning adherents, so that there was no chance of his weakening the expedition by heading or creating a party![1] The captain under Courtney was Edward Cooke, a person of talent and observation and of no small literary ability, whose hatred of the French was only equalled by Rogers.

The venture was thoroughly matured before it was launched. Stringent rules and regulations serving as articles of war were drawn up and signed by the promoters, who called the document "The Constitution." The experiences as well as the advice of Dampier may be traced in these rules. It was required that in case of death, sickness, or desertion, a council should be called of all the officers of the ships, that the person selected should be the unanimous choice, and that all attacks by sea or land should first be generally debated by the whole body of officers. In case of the votes for and against being equal, Captain Dover, as President of the Council, was to have the "double-voice." The manifest object of these articles was to stop the bickerings which commonly attended the undertakings of the privateers, and which were often the cause of their failures and defeats, by importing the general voice into every decision. The ships were the *Duke*, of three hundred tons, thirty guns, and one hundred and seventy men, with Rogers and Dover as first and second captains; and the *Dutchess*, of

[1] But as a member of the committee he might also have claimed a right to participate in the dangers as well as in the commercial risks of the expedition.

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two hundred and seventy tons, twenty-six guns, and one hundred and fifty-one men, whose first and second in command were Courtney and Cooke. Both vessels were commissioned by Prince George of Denmark to cruise on the coasts of Peru and Mexico against the Queen's enemies, the French and Spaniards.

Dampier was on board Woodes Rogers: the story of the expedition, therefore, must be followed to its conclusion, though, unfortunately, our hero has no longer an individuality. His name indeed occasionally occurs, but he vanishes as a figure, and we are merely conscious as we follow the narrative that we are in his company, and that though he is lost to view he is sharing in the exploits and dangers, in the hopes and fears, of the crowd of resolute men whom he pilots.

The two ships set sail from Bristol, or rather from Kingroad, at the mouth of the river Avon, on Monday, August 1st, 1708, and arrived at Cork on the 9th in company with several other ships which had sailed under the convoy of a man-of-war called the *Hastings*. Until the 27th they were busy in thoroughly preparing the ships for the voyage. Here also they received a number of men to take the place of others who had been brought from Bristol, but who, even in the short trip across the St. George's Channel, had proved themselves worthless as sailors. When they weighed on the morning of the 28th their crews were unusually strong. Rogers says that he doubled the number of officers as a provision against mutinies, and also that there might be plenty of qualified persons to take command in case of death. The *Duke* indeed was so full of men that she was obliged to leave a portion of the boatswain's stores behind to

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make room for the people. The proverbial qualities of the sailor show humorously at the outset of this voyage. All hands knew that they were to sail immediately, yet we read that "they were continually marrying whilst we staid at Cork." An instance is given of a Dane whom a Roman Catholic priest had united in holy wedlock to an Irishwoman. Neither understood the other's tongue, and they were forced to hire an interpreter before they could tell each other how fond they were. The inconvenience of unintelligibility, however, did not cool their fervour; on the contrary, it was noticed that this Dane and his Irish wife were more affected by their parting than any of the other couples, "And," says the narrative, "the Fellow continued melancholy for several Days after we were at Sea. The rest understanding each other, drank their Cans of Flip till the last Minute, concluded with a Health to our good Voyages and their happy Meeting, and then parted unconcerned." The number of sailors in both ships when they weighed was three hundred and thirty-three, one-third of whom were foreigners. Many of them were by trade tinkers, tailors, haymakers, pedlars, and fiddlers; there were also a negro and ten boys.

Rogers was glad at the start to sail under convoy of a man-of-war. The holds of both the *Duke* and the *Dutchess* were flush to the hatches with provisions; the 'tween-decks were crowded with cables, with bags of bread, and casks of water; so that it would have been impossible to engage an enemy without throwing a large quantity of the stores overboard. There were one hundred and eighty-two men aboard the *Duke* and one hundred and fifty-one aboard the *Dutchess*, and the crowding, when the tonnage of the ships is thought of side by side

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with their choked holds and 'tween-decks, must have rendered life at the start intolerable to the privateersmen. Despite their condition, however, they agreed to the proposal of the captain of the man-of-war that they should cruise a few days off Cape Finisterre; the crews of the vessels were thereupon mustered, and the nature and intention of the expedition explained to them, in order that such of the men as should show themselves discontented might be sent home as mutineers in the *Hastings*. All professed themselves satisfied with the exception of "one poor Fellow," says Rogers, "who was to have been Tything-man that year, and was apprehensive his Wife would be obliged to pay 40 Shillings for his Default. But when he saw everybody else easy, and strong hopes of plunder, he likewise grew quiet by degrees, and drank as heartily as anybody to the good Success of the Voyage." Yet, despite the assurances of the men, a mutiny happened whilst Rogers was on board a Swedish vessel he had chased, whose papers exempted her. The ringleaders were the boatswain and three of the inferior officers. Ten of the men were put in irons, and a sailor seized to the "jeers" (as the tackles were called which hoisted and lowered the fore and main yards) and punished by the usual process of whipping and pickling. The outbreak was so serious that all the officers went armed, not knowing what was next to happen. After some further trouble and much anxiety the mutiny was quelled, but it needed all Rogers's valuable qualities as a commander to deal with it.

I do not doubt, had Dampier been in charge, that the disturbance would have ended in the ruin of the voyage. Of the unruliness of the crews of that day, hundreds of

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examples may be gathered from the contemporary records. The seaman of Dampier's age was undeniably a lion-hearted man, incomparably intrepid in his conflicts whether with the elements or with the enemies of his country; but it is equally true that most of his characteristics were those of the savage. He was a ruffian in his behaviour, he was a brute in his tastes, he conversed in a dialect that was almost wholly formed of oaths, and he pursued his calling in a skin soaked with the liquor that was served out to him by the gallon at the time. The average merchant-sailor of the last century has been sketched by Fielding in his *Voyage to Lisbon*. "It is difficult," he says, "I think, to assign a satisfactory reason why sailors in general should of all others think themselves entirely discharged from the common bands of humanity, and should seem to glory in the language and behaviour of savages! They see more of the world, and have most of them a more erudite education, than is the portion of landmen of their degree. . . . Is it that they think true courage (for they are the bravest fellows upon earth) inconsistent with all the gentleness of a humane carriage, and that the contempt of civil order springs up in minds but little cultivated at the same time, and from the same principles, with the contempt of danger and death? Is it——? In short, it is so." Happily we may now say it *was* so! But the reason is not hard to find. *Roderick Random* is a full and satisfying reply to Fielding's interrogatory. The sailor of that day was a brute because his life was that of a brute. He was for long months at a time absent from every possible refining influence. He was fed on provisions such as a dog would recoil from. His sea-parlour was a black, wet

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hole, filled with vermin and loathsome with bad smells. His punishments were beyond expression inhuman; he was whipped until his back became a bloody mass, into which brine was rubbed that his sufferings might be rendered more exquisite. He was hoisted to a yard-arm, then dropped suddenly into the water and hauled violently under the ship's keel, and this was repeated until he was nearly drowned. He was lashed half-naked to the mast, and so left to stand for a period often running into days, insulted by his shipmates, and exposed to the scorching heat or the frosty sting of the parallels in which the ship happened to be; he was loaded with irons and immured for weeks in a dark and poisonous forepeak, whose only tenants besides himself were the huge rats of the vessel's hold. It was not, then, that the sailor regarded himself discharged, as Fielding suggests, from the common bands of humanity; he knew nothing of humanity, whether during his brief and roaring orgies ashore or during his long and bitter servitude upon the high seas. The traditions of those days still linger, and the sailor of our own times suffers to a certain extent from prejudices which were excited and perpetuated by the bold and reckless savages of the age of Dampier and, later on, of Fielding. But I am speaking of the average merchantman; it is readily conceivable that the buccaneer or privateersman should have gone far beyond him. He recognised no restrictions save those which were absolutely essential to his safety at sea; his profession of piracy rendered him insensible to cruelty by familiarising him with many of the most violent forms of it; he slept like a wild animal upon the hard deck, with a rug for his cover and nothing

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else between him and the stars. Dampier grimly says in his chapter on the winds: "'Tis usual with Seamen in those parts to sleep on the Deck, especially for Privateers; among whom I made these Observations. In Privateers, especially when we are at an Anchor, the Deck is spread with Mats to lye on each Night. Every Man has one, some two; and this, with a Pillow for the Head and a Rug for a Covering, is all the Bedding that is necessary for Men of that Employ." For one day the freebooter might feast on the fifty delicacies of a plundered ship, and for weeks his food would be so coarse and innutritious as to fill his eyes with the fires of famine and pale his cheek to the haggardness of the corpse. It needed exceptional and extraordinary powers of command to control such wretches. The qualities of the men in charge of Rogers and Courtney are significantly expressed by their early mutiny. Many of them were seasoned buccaneers—ruffians whom not even the common hope could keep straight. Fortunately for his employers, Rogers knew how to handle them.

On the 18th the two vessels captured a small Spanish ship which they carried to Teneriffe. There were some male and female passengers on board, and she was laden with what would now be called a general cargo. The English merchants, to whom possibly a portion of this cargo was consigned, objected to the capture, and represented that they would be in danger if the bark were not restored. The agent of the privateers, a man named Vanbrugh, went ashore and was detained, and it came very near to Rogers and Courtney bombarding the town of Oratava. When the inhabitants saw the vessels standing in with tompions out and all hands at quarters,

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they offered to satisfy the demands of the buccaneers, who thereupon sold the prize for four hundred and fifty dollars and then made haste to sail away, very glad of the chance to once more "mind their own concerns," as Rogers puts it. On the last day of September they dropped anchor in the harbour of St. Vincent, one of the Cape de Verde Islands. Scarcely were they arrived when fresh disturbances arose amongst the men. The mutiny originated in altercations touching the distribution of plunder, and with the hope of terminating these incessant and perilous brawls, the commanders went to work to frame such articles as they believed would inspire the seamen with confidence in the intentions of their superiors. The paper they drew up is preserved, and it is of interest as illustrating a form of marine life that for generations has been as extinct as the ships in which the privateersmen sailed. First of all it was settled that the plunder taken on board any prize by either ship should be equally divided between the companies of both ships. Any man concealing booty exceeding the value of a dollar during twenty-four hours after the capture of a prize was to be severely punished, and to lose his share of the plunder. Article the fourth provided that "If any prize be taken by boarding, then whatsoever is taken shall be every man's own as follows: viz. a Sailor 10 pounds, any Officer below a Carpenter 20 pounds, a Mate, Gunner, Boatswain, and Carpenter 40 pounds, a Lieutenant or Master 80 pounds, and the Captains 100 pounds each, above the gratuity promised by the owners to such as shall signalise themselves." It was further agreed that twenty pieces of eight should be given to him who first saw a prize of good value. Another

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article provided that every man on board, after the capture of a prize, should be searched by persons appointed for that purpose. This agreement was signed by the officers and men of both ships, and was perhaps the best, if indeed it was not the only, expedient that Rogers could have hit upon for silencing the constant mutinous growlings of the rapacious rogues under his command, unavailing as it subsequently proved.

They weighed on October 8th and steered for the coast of Brazil. In spite of thoughtfully-framed articles, handsome concessions on the part of the captains, and the taut discipline of the quarter-deck, the spirit of mutiny continued strong. The men were too numerous; the ship's work made demands upon only a portion of them at a time; the crew had therefore plenty of leisure, which they employed in haranguing one another into insubordination. As an example of the difficulty of dealing with these men, it is related that a fellow named Page, who was second mate of the *Dutchess*, was ordered on board the *Duke* to exchange posts with a man similarly rated. Captain Cooke was sent to fetch him; Page refused to come; a dispute followed, fists were doubled up and the men fell to blows. They managed at last to convey the mutinous mate to the *Duke*, but before they had time to charge him with his offence, he sprang into the sea and started to swim back to his ship. He was recaptured, lifted over the side and punished—probably spread-eagled and man-handled, after the old fashion. Disturbances of this kind were not calculated to gild the prospects of the sober-headed. In the *Dutchess* they had eight of the ringleaders of a party (who had pro-

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posed to run away with the ship) under hatches in irons. There were repeated attempts to desert after the vessels had come to an anchor on November 18th off the coast of Brazil. Two sailors escaped into the woods, but were so terrified by the sight of a number of monkeys and baboons which they mistook for tigers, that they plunged into the water to the depth of their waists, and stood bawling for help until a boat was sent to fetch them aboard. One thinks of Dampier, hot-tempered and prone to despondency, talking with his friend Rogers about the troublesome posture of the crew, expressing many doubts as to the practicability of the voyage, and perhaps suggesting adventures remote from the prescription of the Bristol merchants. An incident peculiar to the old piratical life steals out in this part of the story. Early one morning the people who were on the look-out on the quarter-deck sighted a canoe gliding silently and shadow-like shorewards. It was hailed and ordered to come aboard; but no other answer was returned than the swifter plying of the oars. The pinnace and yawl were manned and sent in pursuit, and on approaching the canoe one of them fired into it to bring it to. It held on bravely nevertheless, but was captured as its stem smote the beach. One of her people was a friar, who with quivering knees instantly owned to possessing a little store of gold, obtained, as the rough sailors surmised, "by his trade of confessing the ignorant." The father was very politely treated, but he did not seem to value the attention paid him by Captain Rogers. What he wanted was his gold, which there is no reason whatever to suppose he ever received. He talked of obtaining justice in Portugal or England,

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and was answered by the hurricane shout to the forecastle to get the ship under-weigh.

The vessels were now fairly bound for the passage of the Horn. The crew, who in the torrid zone growled continuously and piratically in their gizzards, were no sooner in the high latitudes than they grew reasonable. It was the summer season in that hemisphere, but Dampier carried them so far south that all hands nearly perished of cold. At least a third of the people of both ships were down with sickness; and they barely escaped a languishing and miserable end by the good fortune of prosperous winds, which blew them swiftly northwards under more temperate heights. It was necessary to make land speedily for the sake of the men's health, and Juan Fernandez was fixed upon. They steered for the island, but the charts differed and they could not find it. Dampier was as much at a loss as the rest, and wondered at not being able to hit it, telling how often he had been there, and how he carried a most accurate map of the island about with him in his head. In order to find it they were forced to sail in sight of the coast of Chili, so as to obtain "a departure," and then stretch away west upon the parallel of it, or thereabouts. They fell in with it at last, but not until after much fruitless scouring of the seas.

The name of Dampier is intimately associated with the passage that now follows. There is nothing, perhaps, in what may be termed the romantic chapters of the maritime annals more picturesque and impressive than the discovery by the *Duke* and *Dutchess* of Alexander Selkirk on the island of Juan Fernandez. The accentuation the story obtained from the genius of Defoe makes

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it immortal. But even as a mere anecdote, without better skill brought to bear upon it than is found in the plain relations of Rogers and Cooke, its interest is so remarkable, it is so brimful of fascinating inspiration, that of all sea-stories it bids fair to be the longest remembered. Indeed it must be said that a great number of people, otherwise pretty well informed, are familiar with the name of Dampier only in connection with the strange, surprising adventures of Mr. Alexander Selkirk. The narrative belongs peculiarly to Dampier's experiences. Selkirk was mate of the *Cinque Ports* when her captain, Stradling, was Dampier's consort, and he was still that ship's mate when Stradling quarrelled with Dampier at King's Island in the Bay of Panama. The tale is related by Woodes Rogers and by Cooke,[1]—an old-world tale indeed, which every schoolboy has by heart; yet I cannot satisfy myself that its omission on the score of triteness only would be desirable in a volume that professes to recount the most striking passages in the naval career of William Dampier. Cooke's version is fuller than Rogers's—that is to say, he wrote two accounts of it, his reference to it in his first volume being deemed meagre and unsatisfactory by the public, who had been set agape by the wonderful yarn; but Rogers's narrative is the better written; besides, as Dampier is aboard the *Duke*, it is proper to allow his captain to speak. The full story is much too long for quotation at large in these pages; I therefore select the following as

[1] In *A Voyage to the South Sea trade, and round the World.* Wherein an Account is given of Mr. Alexander Selkirk, his manner of Living, and taming some Wild Beasts, during the four years and four months he lived upon the uninhabited Island of Juan Fernandez," 1712.

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amongst the most striking passages. They were off the island on February 1st, 1709, and sent the pinnace ashore with Captain Dover in charge.

"As soon as it was dark, we saw a Light ashore. Our Boat was then about a League from the Island, and bore away for the Ships as soon as she saw the Lights: We put our Lights aboard for the Boat, tho' some were of Opinion the Lights we saw were our Boat's Lights: But as Night came on it appeared too large for that. We fired our Quarterdeck Gun and several Musquets, shewing Lights in our Mizen and Fore Shrouds, that our Boat might find us whilst we were in the Lee of the Island: . . . All this Stir and Apprehension arose, as we afterwards found, from one poor naked Man who passed in our Imagination, at present, for a Spanish Garrison, a Body of Frenchmen, or a Crew of Pirates."

Next day they sent their yawl ashore, and as this boat did not return, they despatched the pinnace to seek her. Rogers then continues:

"Immediately our Pinnace returned from the Shore and brought abundance of Crayfish with a Man cloathed in Goat-skins, who looked wilder than the first Owners of them. He had been on the Island Four Years and Four Months, being left there by Captain Stradling in the *Cinque Ports;* his Name was Alexander Selkirk, a Scotsman who had been Master of the *Cinque Ports*, a Ship that came here last with Captain Dampier, who told me that this was the best man in her, and I immediately agreed with him to be a Mate on board our Ship: 'Twas he that made the Fire last Night when he saw our Ships, which he judged to be English. . . . The reason of his being left here was a Difference between him and

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his Captain; which, together with the Ship's being leaky, made him willing rather to stay here, than go along with him at first; and when he was at last willing to go the Captain would not receive him. . . . He had with him his Cloaths and Bedding, with a Firelock, some Powder, Bullets, and Tobacco, a Hatchet, a Knife, a Kettle, a Bible, some Pratical Pieces, and his Mathematical Instruments and Books. He diverted and provided for himself as well as he could; but for the first eight Months had much ado to bear up against Melancholy and the Terror of being left alone in such a Place. He built two Huts with Pimento-trees, covered them with long Grass, and lined them with the Skins of Goats, which he killed with his Gun as he wanted, so long as his Powder lasted, which was but a Pound; and that being almost spent, he got Fire by rubbing two Sticks of Pimento Wood together upon his Knee. In the lesser Hut, at some Distance from the other, he dressed his Victuals; and in the larger he slept, and employed himself in Reading, singing Psalms, and Praying, so that he said he was a better Christian while in this Solitude than ever he was before, or than he was afraid he should ever be again. At first he never eat anything till Hunger constrained him, partly for Grief and partly for want of Bread and Salt: Nor did he go to Bed till he could watch no longer; the Pimento Wood, which burnt very clear, served him both for Fire and Candle, and refreshed him with its fragrant Smell. . . . By the Favour of Providence and Vigour of his Youth, being now but thirty Years old, he came at last to conquer all the Inconveniences of his Solitude and to be very easy. When his Cloaths were out he made himself a Coat and a Cap of Goat-skins,

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which he stitched together with little Thongs of the same that he cut with his Knife. He had no other Needle but a Nail; and when his Knife was worn to the Back he made others as well as he could of some Iron Hoops that were left ashore, which he beat thin, and ground upon Stones. Having some Linen Cloth by him, he sewed him some Shirts with a Nail, and stitched them with the Worsted of his old Stockings, which he pulled out on purpose. He had his last Shirt on when we found him in the Island. At his first coming on board us he had so much forgot his Language for want of Use that we could scarce understand him; for he seemed to speak his Words by halves. We offered him a Dram; but he would not touch it, having drank nothing but Water since his being there; and it was some Time before he could relish our Victuals."

It is easy to imagine the interest with which Dampier would listen to the recital of his old associate's strange adventures. Cooke tells us that Selkirk had conceived "an irreconcilible aversion to an officer on board the *Cinque Ports*, who, he was informed, was on board the *Duke*, but not being a principal in command, he was prevailed upon to waive that circumstance and accompany Captain Dampier, for whom he had a friendship." Whoever the person may have been, the Scotchman's dislike of him was bitter, and it was to Dampier's persuasions that Rogers owed the services of a man who proved of the utmost use to him whilst lying at the island by enabling him to supply the ships with fresh provisions and by facilitating the business of taking in wood and water. It is observable that Rogers styled Selkirk the governor of the island, a half-humorous and

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half-pathetic fancy (when one thinks of the desperate loneliness of the unhappy man), which Defoe afterwards adopted when making Robinson Crusoe speak of his possessions and territories, his castles and his dependents.

The vessels arrived, as we have seen, on February 1st, and by the 3rd a smith's forge had been conveyed ashore, the coopers were hard at work, and there were tents, or "pavilions," erected for the commanders and the sick. But it was their business not to lose time, for they had long before—that is to say, when they were at the Canaries—heard that five large French ships were coming to search for them in the South Sea; so that very quickly, all the sick men happily recovering rapidly with the exception of two who died, they had refitted their ships, taken in wood and water, and boiled down and stowed away about eighty gallons of sea-lions' oil to use for the lamps, that they might save the candles. This done they set sail, after holding a consultation, which resulted in further regulations for the preservation of discipline; and on May 15th captured a little vessel of sixteen tons, whose master furnished them with the reassuring news that seven French ships, which had been cruising off this part of the coast for some time, had six months previously gone away for the Horn, and it was added they were not likely to return. There was other news besides of a kind to make their mouths water, particularly that the widow of the deceased Viceroy of Peru would shortly embark for Acapulco with her family and the whole of her fortune, and probably break her journey at Payta. They were also told that some months previously a ship had sailed from Payta for Acapulco with two hundred thousand pieces of eight on board, together with a

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rich cargo of liquors and flour. More useful information was conveyed in the statement that a certain Señor Morel was waiting in a stout ship filled with dry goods for a vessel expected from Panama richly laden, with a bishop aboard, and that both craft would put to sea together. The idea of a bishop was commonly associated in the buccaneering mind with visions of the sacred splendours of the altar and the fruits of long years dedicated to painful hoarding. So it was straightway resolved by Rogers and his people to start for a cruise off Payta, meanwhile exercising all possible precaution against discovery lest larger designs should be spoilt.

A few days after they had come to this determination Captain Rogers and Captain Dover fell out. Rogers says that Dover charged him with insolence; Captain Cooke, on the other hand, takes Dover's part in his story of this passage. Difficulties of this kind were incessantly occurring amongst the buccaneers, and on the eve, too, very often of the execution of big projects. The quarrel, however, is not dwelt upon at length; probably the disputants quickly saw the wisdom of calling a truce that they might attend to the serious business of what is grandiloquently termed "the conquest of Guayaquil." The great undertaking was settled thus: Dover was to command a company of seventy marines, Rogers another company of seventy-one officers and sailors, Courtney a third company of seventy-three men, and Dampier was to have charge of the artillery, with a reserve force of twenty-two seamen. Meanwhile Cooke was to command the *Dutchess* with forty-two men, and Captain Robert Fry the *Duke* with forty men; bringing up the whole force to a total of three hundred and twenty. In

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addition there were blacks, Indians, and prisoners, to the number of two hundred and sixty-six; forming an army of five hundred and eighty-six people for the captains and officers to look after. The appetites of the buccaneers were shrewdly sharpened by the understanding that bedding, wearing apparel, gold rings, buttons, buckles, gold or silver crucifixes, watches, liquors, and provisions, should be reckoned fair plunder to be equally divided; but money, women's earrings, loose diamonds, pearls, and precious stones, were to be held as belonging to the merchants. On the 15th there was a smart engagement between the privateersmen's boats and a Spanish ship, in which Rogers lost his brother, who was second lieutenant on board the *Duke*. The vessel was captured, and proved to be the craft in which the bishop had sailed; but he had gone ashore at Point St. Helena, leaving the ship to carry his property to Lima. She had seventy blacks and a number of passengers on board. The lading consisted of bale goods, and a considerable quantity of pearls were found in her. Captain Cooke took charge, and the prisoners were divided between the *Duke* and *Dutchess*.

The little bark of sixteen tons which they had taken some time previously they named the *Beginning*, and on April 21st in the morning she was sent to cruise close inshore to see all clear for the landing of the men. The report she brought was that there was a vessel riding close under the point whose crew, on sighting the *Beginning*, had hurried ashore and vanished. On this the privateersmen rowed towards the town of Guayaquil. The night drew down dark; the men pulled stealthily with muffled oars; an hour before midnight

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they saw a light suddenly spring up in the town, towards which they continued to row very softly until they were within a mile of it; when on a sudden they were brought to a halt by hearing a sentinel call to another and talk to him. Concluding they were discovered, the buccaneers pulled across the river, and lay still and very quiet, waiting and watching. In a few minutes the whole town flashed out into lights, the resonant notes of a great alarm-bell swang through the soft wind, several volleys of musketry were discharged, and a large fire was kindled on the hill to let the town know that the enemy was in the river. The officers in charge of the boats, confounded by this unexpected discovery of their presence, fell to a hot argument and grew so angry that their voices were heard ashore. The Spaniards, who could not understand them, sent post-haste for an Englishman who was then living in the town, and brought him, very secretly, close to the boats that he might interpret what was said. But before he arrived the privateersmen had concluded their arguments.[1] They remained all night in the river, and next day contented themselves with capturing a number of vessels, and receiving the governor under a flag of truce to treat with him about the ransom of the town and ships. But nothing came of the interview; and at four o'clock in the afternoon, on April 23d, the whole force of the buccaneers landed and attacked the place. The Spaniards fired a single volley and fled; the English pressed forward and seized the enemy's cannon, from which every gunner had run saving one, an Irishman,

[1] The Englishman afterwards joined the privateersmen, and told them this story.

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who gallantly stuck to his post until he dropped mortally wounded. The seamen marched through both towns—the Spaniards flying pell-mell before them—firing the houses as they tramped forwards, and leaving gangs of men behind them to guard the churches. There was a thick wood on the right of the place, and all night long the enemy continued to fire from among the trees at the English sentries, but without injuring a man. From time to time bodies of horse and foot showed themselves, but only to wheel about and fly to the first musket levelled at them. Meanwhile a party of twenty-two men went in the *Dutchess's* pinnace up the river, and sacked every house they came across. The enemy was easily kept at bay, and the buccaneers had no trouble in sending booty and provisions in quantities to their ships. In due course messengers, flourishing flags of truce, came to talk about ransoming the town, and after much discussion, the offer of thirty thousand dollars was accepted, of which twenty-five thousand were paid.

The depredations of the buccaneers had been indeed serious enough to threaten the townspeople with absolute ruin if the sacking was not speedily arrested. Scarcely had they withdrawn from Guayaquil when they took a ship full of meal, sugar, and other commodities, making the fourteenth prize they had captured in those seas! The town itself handsomely repaid the labour and danger of assaulting it; about twelve hundred pounds' worth of plate and jewellery, many bales of valuable dry goods, and a great store of merchandise of all kinds, exclusive of wines, waggon-loads of cocoa, several ships on the stocks, and two freshly-launched vessels of four hundred tons each, valued at eighty thousand crowns. But

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for their approach having been discovered they might have found even a handsomer account than this in the capture of the place, for it afterwards came to their ears that the inhabitants in their flight carried away with them money, plate, and jewels to the value of two hundred thousand pieces of eight. Indeed the unhappy Spaniards seem to have been plundered on all sides, for in going the rounds the privateersmen took a number of negroes and Indians laden with goods, which they promptly confessed were stolen, "and we were afterwards informed that in the Hurry the Inhabitants had given Plate and Money to Blacks to carry out of the Town, and could never hear of it after."

On May 11th we find Rogers, Dampier, and their companions running before a strong gale of wind for the Galapagos Islands. A number of the crew were prostrated with a malignant fever contracted at Guayaquil, where, about a month before the buccaneers' arrival, there had raged an epidemic disease of which ten or twelve persons perished every day; until the floors of the churches being filled with bodies, the people dug a great hole close to one of the structures where sailors had been stationed as guards. In this hole lay a pile of putrefied corpses, and the seamen only quitted their posts to return to their ships poisoned. On the 18th they were off a couple of large islands, and sent boats to seek for fresh water. The errand was fruitless, though the searchers went three or four miles into the country in their hunt. Their business now was to go where fresh water was to be had, for of the two crews there were no less than one hundred and twenty men down with fever; Captain Courtney was dangerously ill, and Captain Dover was

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devoting his leisure to prescribing for him. So they made sail for Gorgona, capturing a few vessels as they proceeded, and, anchoring on June 13th, at once distributed their sick amongst the prizes, and set to work to careen and repair the *Duke* and *Dutchess*. By the 28th they had restored their provisions and mounted their guns, having in fourteen days caulked, rigged, discharged, and reloaded their ships; a smart piece of work that greatly astonished the Spanish prisoners, who said that their people usually took a couple of months to careen a vessel at ports where every necessary appliance for this business was to be had. The unhappy captives indeed, whilst watching or assisting the English, would scarcely marvel at their triumphs by land and sea when they observed their ceaseless and vigilant activity,—how, without regard to the climate, they worked from the break of day till darkness stopped their hands, and how, with swift and unerring judgment, they devised expedients for the remedying of difficulties which in the eyes of their astonished prisoners appeared at the time to be insurmountable. "The Natives of Old Spain," says Rogers, "are accounted but ordinary Mariners; but here they are much worse, all the Prizes we took being rather cobbled than fitted out for the Sea; so that had they such Weather as we often meet with in the European Seas in Winter, they could scarce ever reach a Port again as they are fitted; but they Sail here Hundreds of Leagues." Admissions of this kind are as good as saying that seizures in the South Sea went, as achievements, but a very little way beyond the mere act of hailing a ship and bidding her strike. The boldness of the English buccaneers is not very conspicuous in such encounters. Most of the vessels they took were

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navigated by crews of yellow, nervous men, utterly worthless as seamen, with neither heart nor muscle as combatants; whilst the cabins were crowded with priests, women, and sea-sick merchants, who increased the disorder caused by the appearance of a privateer by lamentations and tears, by wild appeals to the saints, and passionate adjurations to the shivering crew. The capture of such craft was as easy as catching flies. The qualities of the English South Seamen of those days must be sought in the records of their assaults on land, their boarding of tall and powerfully armed galleons, their murderous resistance to the attacks of ships-of-state of great tonnage crowded with soldiers and sailors and carrying ten guns to the Rover's one.

Whilst Rogers and his people were at Gorgona they equipped one of their prizes named the *Havre de Grace* as a third ship to act with the *Duke* and *Dutchess*. She was called the *Marquis*, and Captain Cooke took command of her. The business of fitting her out as a war vessel occupied them from June 29th to July 9th, and when she was finished they made a holiday of it, sitting down to a hearty meal and drinking the Queen's health with loud huzzas, and then the health of the owners with more huzzas, and then their own healths until their eyes danced in their heads. Spite of the general joy, however, the *Marquis* proved something of a failure, for Cooke says that her masts were new and too heavy for her, and that being badly stowed she was exceedingly tender, by which is meant that she heeled or lay over unduly to light pressures, and scarcely made headway when on a wind, "so that the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were fain to spare a great deal of sail for me to

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keep up with them." Before lifting their anchors the commanders and officers of the ships met together to value the plunder in order to divide it. One kind of commodities they appraised at four hundred pounds; the silver-hilted swords, buckles, snuff-boxes, buttons, and silver plate at seven hundred and forty-three pounds fifteen shillings, taking the piece of eight at four shillings and sixpence. By this time there were upwards of eighty thousand pounds' worth of property and treasure on board destined for the owners. Dampier, we may well suppose, shared in the high hopes and good spirits of his shipmates. This was the only promising privateering expedition he had ever been engaged in, and if their luck continued he might reasonably flatter himself with the belief that he would even yet snatch an independency out of the reluctant maw of the sea. They had rid themselves of their prisoners by sending them away in some of the prizes. The female captives spoke well of the treatment they had received, and ingenuously confessed that they had met with far more courtesy and civility than their own countrymen would have extended to persons in their condition. The honourable and humane behaviour of the English buccaneers towards their female prisoners became a tradition, which was perpetuated and confirmed by the wise policy of Commodore Anson.[1]

They sailed on August 11th, and nothing noteworthy happened till September 6th, on which date we find Dampier dining with Captain Rogers on board the *Duke* in company with Cooke and Courtney. Cooke

[1] In speaking of the English buccaneers it is necessary to distinguish them from the pirates pure and simple, such as Morgan, Teach, and the other beauties whose lives are given in Captain Charles Johnson's delectable volumes.

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complained bitterly of the crankness of his ship the *Marquis*, and objected to the evolutions of the other vessels which obliged him to tack. They were bound to the Galapagos, and he affirmed that they could have made the islands without beating to windward. Dampier said, No; he knew where those islands were, and had described them in one of his voyages; and he asserted that they were now to the westward of them. The others agreed with Cooke, but Dampier was pilot, and was therefore suffered to have his way. They were right and he was wrong; but an error of a hundred miles or so was reckoned a very trifling blunder in those hearty, plodding times. A curious old sea-picture is suggested by this discussion in the cabin of the *Duke*. The rough bulkheads, the low upper deck, the quaint lanthorn swinging over the table from a beam, and indicating by its oscillations the ponderous rolling of the tall, squab, round-bowed fabric; the privateersmen sitting round the table attired in the wild and picturesque apparel of the early South Seamen—these are features to bring the scene in clear outlines before the eye of the imagination. One beholds them poring upon their old-fashioned charts, pointing to the singular configurations of the mainland and islands with hairy hands, and disputing with little anxiety on a difference between easting and westing measuring as many leagues as the space from the Lizard to the Western Islands. Indeed the real flavour and charm of the buccaneer's life are not to be expressed by any mere method of historical treatment. The hand of the artist is wanted, with imagination vigorous and discerning enough to strictly correspond with the traditionary truth.

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On their arrival at the Galapagos they took in a good supply of turtle, many of which were upwards of four hundred pounds in weight. Rogers writes of the turtle as if he had never seen it before. "I do not," he says, "affect giving Relations of strange Creatures, so frequently done by others; but where an uncommon Creature falls in my Way I cannot omit it." This is how the captain describes the "uncommon creature."

"The Creatures are the ugliest in Nature; the Shell, not unlike the Top of an old Hackney-coach, as black as Jet; and so is the outside Skin, but shriveled and very rough. The Legs and Neck are long and about the Bigness of a Man's Wrist; and they have Clubbed Feet as big as one's Fist, shaped much like those of an Elephant, with five Nails on the Forefeet and but Four behind, and the Head little, and Visage small like Snakes; and look very old and black. When at first surprised they shrink their Head, Neck, and Legs under their Shell."

This is the kind of simplicity that makes the perusal of the old voyages wonderfully refreshing and delightful. The old fellows looked at life with the eyes of a child but with the intelligence of a man; and so it happens that their representations combine a most perfect and fascinating simplicity with the highest possible qualities of acuteness and sagacity.

On October 1st the ships were off the Mexican coast. When the form of the land grew visible Dampier told Rogers that it was hereabouts he attacked the Manila ship in the *St. George*. He might have been right, but Rogers does not speak as if he thought so, for he says: "Captain Dampier indeed had been here, but

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it was a long time ago, and therefore he seemed to know but little of the Matter; yet when he came to land in Places he recollected them very readily." They suffered much from scarcity of fresh water, and sent the pinnace to explore some islands—the Tres Marias—lying off Cape Corrientes. On one of them they found a human skull, which was supposed to have belonged to an Indian who, with another poor wretch of his own race, had been left there by Captain Swan some twenty-three years before. Dampier of course well remembered the circumstance; he had been with Swan in the *Cygnet* at the time, and could recollect that provisions being scarce they had left the unhappy Indians to make, as Rogers says, a miserable end on a desert island. To judge, however, from the refreshments these uninhabited spots yielded, the Indians could not have perished from starvation. The buccaneers met with hares, turtle-doves, pigeons, and parrots, on all of which they fared sumptuously. The sick thrived, and the general health of the crews was never better. On November 1st they were in view of the high coast of California. It was much about the date on which Sir Thomas Candish had taken the Manila ship, and, strangely enough, their keels ploughed the very tract of water in which that remarkable feat had been achieved. The memory, aged to us, but lacking nothing of its old lustre, was to those men comparatively recent, and the recollection was one to animate them with great hopes and stern resolves. They were indeed bent now on the adventure whose successful issue had loaded Candish's ship with treasure. They were on the look-out for the galleon, and that nothing might be omitted to render fortune propitious,

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they again put in force the rules which had formerly been laid down for cruising, established fresh regulations, and made clear every dubious item in their programme of proceedings and plunder. It was this galleon that was to make their fortunes; she it was also that formed the grand hope of the Bristol committee of merchant adventurers; and the design of capturing her was the mainspring of the whole expedition. After a consultation it was agreed that they should dispose themselves thus: the *Marquis* was to keep off the land at a distance of from six to nine leagues at least; the *Duke* was to cruise at a range that would cover forty-five miles; and the *Dutchess* was to occupy the waters between her consorts. There were, of course, false alarms; as, for instance, on the 28th the *Marquis* fired a gun, which was promptly answered by the *Dutchess*, on which the *Duke* hauled her wind for the coast. It then turned out that the *Marquis* had mistaken the *Duke* for the Manila ship, and fired as a signal for the *Dutchess* to chase. They had to wait a long time before the vessel they wanted hove in sight. It was now a month later than the usual time of her appearance in this part of the sea where she was being waited for, and the anxiety of the buccaneers was increased by their inability to obtain any intelligence of her. Provisions were again scarce, and even on short allowance there was barely bread enough to last for seventy days,—a serious matter in the face of the inevitable run later on to the Ladrone Islands, which promised to occupy fifty days at the very least. This most unfortunate dearth of stores, coupled with the growing dejection and mutinous sulkiness of the men, determined Rogers and his brother commanders to give themselves another week's chance,

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and then, if the galleon did not appear, to sail away to the Indies.

In order to save time the *Dutchess* was despatched to a convenient bay to take in water and wood, etc., that as one ship obtained these stores another might take her place, thus always leaving two on the look-out. By the 4th she had taken in what was necessary, and the *Marquis* replaced her to refit. Until December 21st nothing happened; then on the morning of that day, when the *Duke* was in the act of shifting her helm for the place where the *Marquis* was refitting, the look-out man aloft hailing the deck, shouted that he saw a sail bearing west about twenty miles distant. The English ensign was immediately hoisted, and in a few minutes both the *Duke* and the *Dutchess* were standing towards the stranger; but on a sudden it fell stark calm, and as conjecture was hopeless and expectation insupportable, the pinnace was manned and sent to see what she could make of the distant ship. In reading Rogers's account, you find your sympathies curiously enlisted on behalf of those two stagnated buccaneering vessels, and witness with but little effort of imagination the crowds of weather-darkened, fiery-eyed men, some in the rigging, some at the masthead, some leaning in impetuous pose against the rail, staring their very hearts out under the sharp of their hands at the cotton-white outline, glimmering like the tip of a sea-bird's pinion on the edge of the distant gleaming horizon, whence the swell rolls in folds of oil to the wet and flashing sides of the ships; the officers on the quarter-deck peering their hardest through the lean and unsatisfying perspective-glasses of those days; Dampier and Rogers together rehearsing their

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intentions and recalling their experiences in voices subdued by excitement; above all, the old, worn, but gallant *Duke* wearily dipping her faded, blistered bends to the swing of the breathless sea, making in anticipation of the withering roar of her ordnance, now grinning mutely along her sides, a little thunder of her own with the beating of her dark and well-patched canvas against the huge tops and massive cross-trees of her swaying masts. "All the rest of the Day," says Rogers, "we had very little Wind, so that we made no great Way; and the Boat not returning, kept us in a languishing Condition, not being able to determine whether the Sail was our Consort, the *Marquis*, or the *Acapulco* Ship. Our Pinnace was still in Sight, and we had nothing to do but to watch her Motions: We could see that she made towards the *Dutchess's* Pinnace, which rowed to meet her. They lay together some time, and then the *Dutchess's* Pinnace went back to their Ship which gave us great Hopes." An officer was sent to the *Dutchess* to ascertain what the stranger was, and to concert measures, if she should prove an enemy, for engaging her. When he was gone Rogers hoisted the French colours and fired a gun; the strange vessel answered, which satisfied them that she was not the *Marquis*. It is manifest from this that these privateersmen had no private code of signals amongst them. Indeed detection seems to have been entirely a matter of the exhibition of the national bunting, in which there was just the same sort of deception then as there was in later years, and as there ever will be. Shortly after the ship had responded, the officer returned with the report that she was the Manila galleon. The statement fired the spirits of the crew;

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they hove all their melancholy reflections on the shortness of their provisions overboard, and could think of nothing but the figures they would make when they arrived home with the vast treasure out yonder, stowed snugly away under their hatches. "Every moment," says Rogers, "seemed an hour till we came up with her." It was arranged that the two pinnaces should stick to her skirts all night and burn flares, that their own and the position of the chase might be known; and it was further settled that if the *Duke* and *Dutchess* were so fortunate as to come up with her together they were to board her at once: a resolution which Dampier, recalling his experiences in the *St. George*, was pretty sure to strengthen by his advice.

At dawn the chase was upon the weather-bow of the *Duke*, about three miles away, and the *Dutchess* within a couple of miles to leeward of her. Rogers threw his sweeps over and rowed his ship for above an hour; a light breeze then sprang up and softly blew the vessel towards the enemy. There was no liquor in the ship, nothing to fortify the spirits in the shape of a dram; so a large kettle of chocolate was boiled and served out to the crew, who, when they had emptied their pannikins, went to prayers. But whilst they were in the midst of their devotions they were interrupted by a broadside from the Spaniards. It is not often that one reads of the English buccaneers going to prayers before falling to their business of slaughtering and plundering. Perhaps they had learnt to despise this kind of ceremony from the behaviour of the French freebooters, who were wont to sing Te Deum and force captive priests to celebrate Mass in the cathedrals and churches which they

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had despoiled. If the Spaniards saw Rogers's privateersmen on their knees, something of irony might have been intended by their manner of cutting short their worship and supplications. The Don was fully prepared; his guns loaded, his little army of men at stations, and casks of gunpowder hanging at his yard-arms ready to fall and explode when the attempt should be made to board. The action began at eight o'clock, and the *Duke* for some time fought the galleon single-handed. The conflict was a brief one. The Spaniards had no stomach, and after Rogers had poured in a few broadsides the enemy "struck her colours two-thirds down." His flag was thus flying when the *Dutchess* came up and fired five guns at the big ship along with a volley of small shot. It was mere waste of powder; the galleon had already submitted and was silent. The victory, it must be admitted, was cheaply earned, yet there is little doubt that such was the temper of the buccaneers they would have fought to the last man for this golden prize. She was a large vessel named *Nostra Seniora de la Incarnacion Disenginao*, mounting twenty guns and twenty swivels, and carrying one hundred and ninety-three men, of whom nine were killed and several wounded. The fight lasted three glasses, that is three hours. Rogers was shot through the left cheek; the bullet destroyed the greater part of his upper jaw, and some of his teeth were found upon the deck where he fell. He was obliged to give his orders in writing to hinder the flow of blood, and to escape the agony of attempting to articulate. Only one man besides himself was wounded. Having repaired the trifling damage they had sustained, they steered for the harbour where the *Marquis* lay, and anchored. They found

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their consort fully equipped and ready to sail, and her people in good spirits and eager for action. At night a consultation was held respecting the disposal of the hostages, and as a second Manila ship was daily expected, they debated plans for capturing her. After some talk it was agreed that the hostages should be set at liberty; but the discussion about the expected galleon ended in something like a quarrel. Rogers, speaking in the heat of the moment, had censured Courtney for not having shown the promptitude that was necessary in attacking the *Nostra Seniora*. This Courtney of course resented as a reflection upon his honour. When, then, Rogers proposed to cruise in the *Dutchess* for the coming Manila ship, Courtney insisted upon making the search in the *Marquis*. The question was put to the vote, Rogers's proposal overruled, and his people obliged, to their great mortification, to remain in the harbour. This incident is related so obscurely both by Cooke and Rogers that I confess I do not fully understand it. The *Duke* was in good condition, and why the three instead of the two ships did not start on a cruise which, as the sequel proves, demanded even more than their united strength, is a riddle I am unable to solve.

On Christmas Day the *Dutchess* and the *Marquis* put to sea, and when they were gone Rogers posted two sentinels on the top of a hill that he might instantly be apprised of a third sail heaving in sight. Before twenty-four hours had elapsed the signal was made, and in hot haste Rogers started to the assistance of his consorts, though the stout-hearted sailor was in no condition for further adventures just then. He was indeed so weak from loss of blood that he could scarcely stand. His

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head and throat were swollen, and the effort to speak caused him excruciating pain; but he turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of the officers and surgeons that he would remain in harbour on board the prize. The galleon was in sight at daybreak, and by noon the *Marquis* had succeeded in bringing her to an engagement. The wind was light, and it was almost impossible to manœuvre the vessels; so that though the *Dutchess* and the *Marquis* continued at intervals to fire at the Manila ship until dusk, the *Duke* even at midnight was still at a considerable distance from the enemy. When the day broke the wind shifted, and Rogers was able to bring his guns to bear. The fighting was now severe, and continued so for four hours; the galleon was hotly defended, though her people lay so concealed in their close quarters that the privateersmen could scarcely make any use of their small arms. It was only when a head appeared or a port was opened that they found a mark for their muskets. The eagerness of the buccaneers defeated their seamanship. Their vessels were repeatedly falling foul of one another and throwing the crews into disorder. The guns of the *Marquis* were so small that her firing was to little or no purpose. At last it came to Rogers signalling to Courtney and Cooke to come on board him with other officers; and then every man telling of the injuries his ship had sustained, and all admitting that it would jeopardise too many lives to board or attempt to board the lofty galleon, it was resolved to let her go—that is to say, they agreed to keep her company till night, and then in the darkness to lose her, and make the best of their way back to the prize they had already secured. In sober truth the

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enemy had proved too many for them. The *Duke's* mainmast was so wounded that Rogers expected every moment to see it go by the board. Her rigging, too, was so shattered by shot that she had to sheer off in order to knot and splice, being scarcely manageable. The *Dutchess* also had her foremast badly wounded, her sails were in rags, and the ends of her standing rigging were trailing overboard. Further, there were not above one hundred and twenty men in all three ships fit for boarding, "and those but weak," says Rogers, "having been very short of Provisions;" and that nothing might be wanting to complete the list of the reasons of their failure, their ammunition was very nearly expended. Rogers was again wounded, this time in his left foot. In the *Dutchess* they had twenty men killed and disabled. The *Marquis*, on the other hand, came off without the loss of a single person. The galleon was a handsome ship, very large, carrying the flag of the admiral of Manila. She was making the voyage for the first time. Her name was the *Vigonia;* she was pierced for sixty guns, forty of which were mounted, along with an equal number of brass swivels. Her crew numbered over four hundred and fifty men, and there were many passengers besides. It was supposed that she was worth ten millions of dollars; but it is doubtful whether, even if the buccaneers had succeeded in boarding, they would have taken her, for Rogers says: "After my Return into Europe I met in Holland with a Sailor who had been on board the large Ship when we engaged her; and he let us into the Secret that there was no taking her; for the Gunner kept constantly in the Powder-room, declaring that he had taken the Sacrament to blow the

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Ship up if we boarded her; which made the Men, as may be supposed, exceedingly resolute in her defence. I was the more ready to credit what this Man told me because he gave as regular and circumstantial account of the Engagement as I could have done from my Journal."[1]

On the first day of the new year, 1710, they were again in harbour alongside their great prize; and now being anxious to leave these seas, they put their prisoners on board one of the smaller captures with water and provisions enough to last them for a voyage to Acapulco, and then addressed themselves to the urgent business of repairing and making all ready for their departure. They renamed the galleon the *Batchelor*, and a quarrel arose touching the appointment of a commander for her, a post regarded by them all as of dignity and importance. Captain Dover, asserting his claims as a merchant adventurer, and representing the considerable sum of money he had risked in this expedition, demanded the berth. Rogers and others, among whom, no doubt, would be Dampier, objected that Dover knew nothing whatever of navigation, and voted for Cooke Finally, at the cost of many high words and much strong feeling, it was decided at a full council that Captain Fry and Captain Stretton should have entire control of the navigation of the *Batchelor* under Captain Dover, Alexander Selkirk to be the master and Joseph Smith the chief mate. The island of Guam was then fixed upon as a rendezvous, and on January 10th the buccaneers weighed for a run to the East Indies.

[1] Moreover, there was a number of pirates on board with their booty, for the preservation of which, we may take it, they intended to fight hard.

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They were when they started in no very enviable condition. Their stores were scanty; their live stock consisted of four hens; and of wine or spirits they had barely the contents of a dozen bottles. The rations were limited to a pound and a half of flour and a small piece of meat for a mess of five men, with three pints of water a man on twenty-four hours for drink and cooking. Rogers was ill with his wounds, and many of the crew were sick and weak and unfit to do the work of the ship. Hunger drove the men into robbery. A few days after they sailed some pieces of pork were missed. Fortunately, in the interests of justice, the thieves were discovered, and punished by every man of the watch giving them a stroke of the cat-o'-nine-tails.

What follows now is little more than a journal of the voyage, rendered for the most part tedious by description and by the introduction of incidents of little or no interest. Dampier's name seldom occurs; when it is mentioned it is always in reference to something that helps to accentuate characteristics noticeable in his own account of his adventures. For instance, in April, when they were off a point of land which they took to be the north-east point of Celebes, the vessel was proving very leaky; which, added to the general ignorance of the ship's situation, filled the crew with melancholy and irritation. "Captain Dampier," says Rogers, "discouraged us very much: He had been twice here, and therefore what he said among the Seamen passed without Dispute, and he laid it down as a thing certain that if we could not reach Ternate or find the Island of Tula it was impossible for us to get any Refreshment, there being nothing to be met with on the Coast of New

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Guiney." It had been thus with Dampier whilst buccaneering off the New Holland shore; thus had it been with him too when hunting for water on the sand-hills of the Western Australian seaboard, his foot on the margin of a vast region of earth which he had neither temper nor heart to explore, though he had travelled many thousands of miles in a crazy ship and with a troublesome crew for no other purpose. This trick of discouraging the people he led, or was one of, is the secret of his failure as a commander and explorer. Rogers, a bolder and more hopeful, and certainly in many respects an equally sagacious man, was not likely to feel grateful for Dampier's melancholy shakes of the head, and his gloomy, prognosticating countenance; but his own experiences left him nothing to say, for though the ships spent the best part of the month of May off the coast of New Guinea, all that Rogers could observe that seemed to him worth mentioning was, "It is most certain these Islands, which are scattered through the Streights, and few or none of which are peopled, would all of them bear Spice, and afford immense Riches to this Nation, if they were settled."

They were in great distress whilst they were in these seas. The men mutinously resented the wise reduction in the quantity of the food served out to them; and to save serious disturbance Rogers was forced to return to the old scale. They sighted land, but did not know what it was, nor could Dampier help them. Having searched for Borou, an island of the Indian Archipelago, they resolved to steer to Batavia, touching at Bouton for provisions. Accordingly they stood away to the south-west before a strong

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gale of wind at east. But their progress was obstructed by some small islands, into one of which they must have run in the dead of night had the weather not cleared suddenly and discovered it to them. It was not until Tuesday, June 17th, 1710, that they arrived at Batavia. At sight of the town the crews were so rejoiced that they could do nothing but hug and shake one another by the hand, and bless their stars and question if there was such a paradise in all the world; "And this," says Rogers, "because they had Arrack for Eight Pence a Gallon, and Sugar at a Penny a Pound."

The ships were in a deplorable condition, particularly the *Marquis*, which was so rotten with worms and wear that it became necessary to hire another craft to carry her lading. They sailed from Batavia on October 14th, and proceeded direct to the Cape of Good Hope, where they arrived without misadventure and without any incident occurring in the passage that is worth repeating. Shortly after they had entered Table Bay twelve sail of Dutch ships came in, which, with the English vessels then at anchor, made altogether twenty-three ships riding in the spacious and beautiful haven. The picture is about one hundred and seventy years old, and it is difficult to realise that the ocean traffic of those dim times to the Indies by way of the Cape should have been considerable enough to crowd the spacious surface of the waters on whose margin stand the ivory-white structures of Cape Town. Retrospect is often corrective. We have a right to compliment ourselves upon what we have done and are doing; but it does not seem to me that our marine achievements can be compared as illustrations of human skill and determination with the examples of the adventurous genius of an age

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when the greater portion of the antipodean world lay in darkness; when navigation was little better than guess-work; when the art of shipbuilding was crude, rude, and primitive; when there was nothing but the heavens to consult for weather; when the tyranny of the winds was only to be dominated by a kind of perseverance that must be ranked among the lost qualities of human nature. Despite these conditions the early mariner crowded the oceans with fabrics laden with the produce of the known continents, and rolled stubbornly to his hundred ports, often in suffering and often in distress indeed; yet on the whole freer, in his valiant ignorance, from disaster than is the sailor of the current hour. There is no longer need for ships to halt and bait at Table Bay. The propeller thrashes them to their destination with the punctuality of the railway-train; or they are wafted by pyramids of canvas—the graceful and elegant result of centuries of experiment—on a journey to New Zealand or Japan, which they complete in less time than the old seafarer took to find his way from the English Channel to Madeira. But the very existence of the facilities of the engine-room, of the nimbleness of the clipper-moulded keel, of the capacity of the towering and exquisitely-calculated heights of cloths to snatch a desired power of propulsion from the teeth of the antagonistic gale, is, I take it, an admission of our own weakness when we contrast the ocean-machinery with which science has dowered us with the contrivances with which the early seamen triumphed over the forces of Nature and created new worlds as heritages for a self-complacent posterity. Those twenty-three ships at anchor in Table Bay, surveyed by the eyes of Dampier

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and his toil-worn comrades, make but a little part of a great marine pageant; yet it is a detail to constrain the gaze. Fancy reconstructs them; they cease to be visionary; they float before us as substantial fabrics, brave with pennons and the glitter of brass guns and the gay raiment of their time. They illustrate the most strenuous of all the periods of the world's maritime life; for the infancy of navigation was over, and it had already put on the proportions of a youthful giant, the impulse of whose unripened vitality was urging it to extraordinary efforts.

Before the ships under Rogers sailed, six more vessels entered the bay, along with several English Indiamen and a large Portuguese carrack from Brazil; and when the hour of departure came the homeward-bound (in all, English and Dutch, numbering twenty-five) rolled stately under swelling canvas out of Table Bay,—a spectacle that, remote as it is, and visible only to the gaze of fancy, cannot but stir the imagination when one thinks of the floating castles, with their swelling sails and their brilliant streamers, as the van of the ever-growing procession that was in time to whiten the remotest seas, and crowd the harbours of countries of which some were then without the impress of a European foot.

The ships progressed merrily. They touched at St. Helena, and seven days later at Ascension, and after a passage of three months from the Cape of Good Hope dropped anchor in the Texel. Rogers and his brother commanders had now to act with much circumspection; they were informed by letters from their owners that the English East India Company, jealous of their success, had appointed a secret committee to inspect their charter

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as to privileges; they were also enjoined to exercise the utmost caution in respect of the Dutch East India Company, and strict orders were issued that no officer or sailor should on any pretence whatever be suffered to take any goods on shore, or purchase the least trifle from any stranger who visited the ships. They remained in Holland until September 30th, 1711, then sailed from the Texel under convoy of four of Her Britannic Majesty's ships, and on October 14th the *Duke* and *Dutchess* arrived off Erith, at which place the *Batchelor* had come to an anchor some short time before. Thus ended one of the most memorable of all the voyages ever undertaken by the English buccaneers. The cargo and treasure obtained by this expedition were valued at between three and four hundred thousand pounds, and Cooke tells us that, after allowing for all deductions, such as cost of convoy, agency, lawsuits, and thefts, the net profits amounted to one hundred and seventy thousand pounds.

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CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

As Dampier steps over the ship's side the reader is prepared to learn that no more is heard of him. He is a shadow amongst a congregation of shades, and when he quits his comrades his first stride carries him into absolute obscurity, and he vanishes like a puff of tobacco smoke. One would be glad to be able to do more than give a mere handshake of farewell to such an English sailor as this. It would be pleasant to be able to follow him, to learn what sort of life he led, what new adventures, if any, he met with, what his health was, and what his means, the pleasures he took ashore, and the esteem in which he was held by those with whom he conversed before that dark old soldier Death quietly beckoned him out. I think we may take it that he never married whilst he pursued his sea-life; but when he came ashore for good he was tolerably advanced in years, and it would not be safe to conjecture what he did then. He had never known the comforts of a home, and the old seaman might find a kind of excuse for marrying in that reflection. Captain Cooke says that the net profits of Rogers's voyage (see previous page) were fairly divided amongst the officers and

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crew. This is to be doubted. Before the officers and crew touched a penny the Bristol merchants, of whom there was a great number in the venture, would take their share, and we may suppose that their dividend did not leave the balance a very big one for the many people who had claims upon it. A man named Hatley, who sailed in 1719 with Shelvocke and Clipperton, was wont to declare that "he knew by woeful experience how they were used on board the *Duke* and *Dutchess;* that they were never paid one-tenth of their due, and that it plainly appeared how a certain gentleman designed to treat them, by his bullying them, and endeavouring to force them from Gravesend before they had received their river pay and impress money."[1] Dampier's claims were no doubt ranked amongst those of the officers; but whatever his share might have been, it is not very conceivable that, invested, it yielded him an income sufficient for his plainest requirements.

He was fifty-nine years old when he returned from his last voyage. Even assuming that his health was good enough to suffer him to go on using the sea, it is more than probable that at the age of sixty he would exhibit no further taste for the hard, perilous, and unremunerative calling. Considering the eminence he had achieved, it is strange that there are no discoverable contemporary references to this portion of his life; none, at all events, that I have been able to meet with or hear of, though I have not spared inquiry. This silence might sanction the conjecture that on his return he went into the country, perhaps to his little Dorsetshire estate, if it be

[1] *A Voyage Round the World*, by Captain George Shelvocke, p. 38. The "certain gentleman" was probably Captain Dover.

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reasonable to suppose that he had not parted with it in the time of his poverty, and died not long afterwards amid the obscurity of rural and provincial surroundings. But speculation is fruitless, and even unwise, in the face of the chance of the story of his ending being some of these days lighted upon; for the literary digger was never more active than he is now, and a spadeful of the old mould of time may yet be thrown up with information enough in it about this circumnavigator to answer all questions as to his closing years. Anyway I think we may be pretty sure that he never went to sea again. A sailor ages rapidly on the salt-beef, honeycombed biscuit, and stormy weather of his vocation, and at fifty is commonly as old in body and mind as the landsman at seventy. Dampier was a seaman when he was a boy, and no man, even in those strenuous ocean-going days, ever lived a harder and more wearing life. He had spent years in the most unhealthy and enfeebling climates in the world; he had starved on rotten food, lain unsheltered on deck through the damp and fever-breeding nights of the West Indian and Panama parallels; he had had more than most men's share of worry and anxiety; he had drunk deep of the cup of disappointment, and he had sounded poverty to its depths. We may then fairly consider him as an old man at sixty, and assume with confidence that as he wanted both the taste and the opportunity for further seafaring, the last voyage he ever took in this world was as pilot to his friend Woodes Rogers.

There is a tradition that he was known to Defoe, which Sir Walter Scott traces to a passage in the *Review*. Whether Defoe knew Dampier in the flesh or

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not, his literary obligations to him appear considerable. *Captain Singleton*, published in 1720; the nautical passages in *Colonel Jack*, published in 1722; *A New Voyage Round the World*, published in 1725; together with a variety of ocean incidents to be met with in *Roxana*, *Moll Flanders*, and in others of the voluminous publications of this master, seem to me directly inspired by Dampier's writings. There were indeed Cowley, Wafer, Ringrose, Cooke, and the contemporary buccaneering authors to consult; but it is only necessary to contrast Defoe's tales of the sea, the marine passages in his shore stories, and his accounts of foreign countries, with the descriptions of Dampier, and more particularly the reflections with which he interpolates his narratives, to perceive the true source of some of the finest of the imaginations of the author of *Captain Singleton* and *Robinson Crusoe*. Defoe exhibited his gratitude in an odd form. Here are some opening passages in his *New Voyage Round the World*:

"It has for some ages been thought so wonderful a thing to sail the tour or circle of the globe, that when a man has done this mighty feat he presently thinks it deserves to be recorded, like Sir Francis Drake's. So, as soon as men have acted the sailor, they come ashore and write books of their voyage, not only to make a great noise of what they have done themselves, but, pretending to show the way to others to come after them, they set up for teachers and chart-makers to posterity. Though most of them have had this misfortune, that whatever success they have had in the voyage they have had very little in the relation, except it be to tell us that a seaman, when he comes to the

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press, is pretty much out of his element, and that a very good sailor may make but a very indifferent author."

Language of this sort does not sound very graciously in the mouth of a man whose best work is owing to the hints he obtains from the people whose labours and publications he ridicules. I hope I shall not be deemed heterodox if I say that, in my humble judgment, great as is my veneration for Defoe, in point of interest neither his *New Voyage* nor his *Captain Singleton* is to be compared with the narratives of Dampier, Cooke, Rogers, and Shelvocke; whilst there is a quaintness and freshness about their plain, manly, sailorly style which I instantly miss on turning to Defoe's later books. It is quite true indeed that when the *New Voyage Round the World* was written the circumnavigation of the globe was no longer considered an extraordinary feat; but then forty-two years had elapsed since Dampier had sailed with the buccaneers from Virginia on his first tour, and in that interval the experiences of the journey —deemed remarkable at the time—had been often enough repeated by his own and the voyages of others, to rob the accomplishment of all its wonder. Dampier's best merits have been fairly expressed by Sir Walter Scott, whose reference to him in connection with the life of Defoe was inevitable. He speaks of him as a mariner "whose scientific skill in his profession and power of literary composition were at that time rarely found in that profession, especially amongst those rough sons of the ocean who acknowledged no peace beyond the Line, and had as natural an enmity to a South American Spaniard as a greyhound to a hare, and who, though distinguished by the somewhat mild term of buccaneer, were little

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better than absolute pirates." This is true, but more may be said. Dampier was not only the finest sailor of his day—I mean in the strictly professional sense of the word—his travels are to this hour foremost among the best-written and most interesting in the language. Seafaring and literary qualifications are a rare combination even in our own age of stiff marine-examinations, of a race of naval officers distinguished for their culture and their breeding, and of a merchant navy whose masters and mates are, in the higher ranges at least, persons of education and intelligence. But in Dampier's day the sailor, whether he fought for the throne or for merchant adventurers, or toiled for himself as a sea-carrier, was a coarse, unlettered man. The union in Dampier of the qualities which he exhibited must have rendered him something of a prodigy to his contemporaries, whilst it forms his claim upon the attention and esteem of posterity. No mariner ever observed more closely. In his *Discourse of Winds* he anticipates half the contents of the volumes of Piddington and Reid.[1] One would say indeed that Dampier never passed an hour without pulling out his notebook. Piddington particularly calls attention to the accuracy of the old sailor's touches in his picture of the banks of red clouds which herald the bursting of a typhoon in the China seas. He also refers to Dr. Franklin's Letters, in which

[1] The former writer observes with great justice: "We are perhaps too much accustomed to rely on our instruments nowadays, and we neglect those signs which must after all have been the barometers and simpiesometers of Drake, Cavendish, Dampier, and all our daring band of naval and commercial navigators up to the end of the last century, and still are so for our hardy fishermen and coasters." *The Sailor's Horn Book*, p. 240, 1851.

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there is a paper of extracts from Dampier's Voyages that was read at the Royal Society—he does not say when—and quotes at large, as substantiating a theory of his own, a passage in the extracts descriptive of the appearance, motion, and danger of the waterspout. So in a score of other directions. No bird of strange plumage meets Dampier's eye but his pen, with microscopic fidelity, reproduces its hues, form, and tricks of flight and movement. He will pause in his narrative to describe a fish, and make you see it as clearly as though you leaned over the side with him watching it. All variety of products he carefully notes. He has also a quick eye for human nature, detects and dryly represents the characteristics of his shipmates, and sketches with humorous gravity the hideous New Guinea savage whose tatooings he enlarges upon, or the primrose-coloured Chinaman whose tail he measures. He is probably at his best in the Supplement he wrote to the *Voyage Round the World*. The mariner must have received with gratitude this remarkable description of the towns and coasts of the Dutch possessions in the East Indies and of Tonquin. There was nothing in "Waggoner" at all resembling such writing as this, nothing so trustworthy, nothing indeed in any other existing sea-volume so helpful to the sailor. He was the best hydrographer and geographer of his age, and in truth in many respects I hardly know where to look for his equal when I reflect upon what he did, and consider the heroic obstinacy with which he persevered in his high resolution to observe and note down all that he saw in defiance of the distractions of a life of hardship, conflict, and brutal association, and despite the lack of the twenty scientific conveniences

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which now facilitate the labours of the navigator and explorer.

And perhaps those who respect his memory most will be best pleased to think he was a failure as a buccaneer. I have already quoted a passage from his preface in which he does not dissemble the repugnance with which he recurs to his life of piracy. Nothing could be more intelligible than the disgust and loathing that possessed him when he sat in silence writing his book, and thinking of the character of the persons whom it was necessary he should refer to as his intimates. They were sailors indeed, but they were also brutes; no man knew that better than Dampier; no man was better acquainted than he with the vices, the profligacy, the horrors of the every-day speech of the men whose company he had kept for months and years.[1] That quality of sympathetic adhesion which the French call *esprit de corps* was not likely to exist in a man who, when he had parted from his shipmates, found the recollection of them insupportable. Indeed he was but a poor buccaneer. He was as courageous as the best man he ever sailed with; plunder he loved as well as the rest; but he despised and detested his associates, and probably only held his own amongst

[1] Captain William Snelgrave, in his *A New Account of Guinea and the Slave-Trade*, 1754, paints a lively picture of the behaviour and conversation of privateersmen. "I took leave of the Captain and got into my Hammock, tho' I could not sleep in my melancholy Circumstances. Moreover the execrable Oaths and Blasphemies I heard among the Ship's Company shock'd me to such a degree, that in Hell itself I thought there could not be worse; for tho' many seafaring men are given to swearing and taking God's Name in vain, yet I could not have imagined human Nature could ever so far degenerate, as to talk in the manner those abandoned wretches did." P. 217.

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them by the exaction of that sort of respect which such fellows would feel for a man of education, of wide experience, and the best navigator of his time. The reason of his failure as a commander his own narratives make clear. His books show that he understood human nature, but his actions prove that he could not control or direct it. Nor is it hard to see why he was unsuccessful as an explorer. He appeared to exhaust his energy in theories, so that by the time he addressed himself to action nearly all his enthusiasm was gone. The importunities which led to his being placed in command of the *Roebuck* and despatched to the Southern Ocean must have been eloquent. No doubt he was perfectly sincere in his representations. As a privateersman he had sighted the shores of the unknown land of the antipodes; how far south it extended he could not imagine, but vast portions of it lay under heights which by analogous reasoning he could prove fertile and beautiful, rich in promise to the coloniser, and assuring an enlargement of the dominions of the sovereign by the acquisition of a territory possibly vaster than the whole of Europe. All this, we may take it, he fully believed, and eagerly, impetuously, and eloquently expressed. But the passage from England to Western Australia was a long one. His ardour had cooled before he was off the coast of Brazil. He was chagrined by the behaviour of his crew, and there were other causes to cloud and chill his excitable and impressionable nature. You can see that he had lost all heart, or at least all appetite, for the quest he had undertaken long before the coast of New Holland rose over his bows. Men of Dampier's temperament may be able to write engaging narratives of their adventures, and exhibit all

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the solid virtues of the sober, as well as all the airy qualities of the poetic, observer; but they are not formed of the stuff of which explorers are made. Their pulse beats too hotly at the start and too languidly towards the end. Yet the world does well to hold the name of Dampier in memory as a skilful seaman, an acute observer, an agreeable writer, and a thorough Englishman.

THE END

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